MEMORY'S UNCERTAIN:
MOURNING AND DOUBT IN THREE TALES BY EDGAR ALLAN POE

By

WILLIAM LAMBERT JERNIGAN

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

1994

I dedicate this dissertation to the memories of Louis L. Jernigan, the father I never knew; of James M. Peeler, Jr., the father who tried to raise me; and of Robert Huffacker, a father in spirit; and to the survivors, Elizabeth Landon, my mother; Rachel Lee Jernigan, my loving daughter; and Cheryl L. Bailey, her mother.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

MEMORY'S UNCERTAIN:
MOURNING AND DOUBT IN THREE TALES BY EDGAR ALLAN POE

By

William Lambert Jernigan

December 1994

Chairperson: John P. Leavey, Jr.
Major Department: English

This dissertation examines some unsettling effects of
mourning and skepticism on memory in Edgar Allan Poe.
Unfounding any (con)textual distinction, mourning and
skepticism suggest losses that lead to keepings in crypts.
Inherited as phantasmic ruins and haunted suspensions, these
cryptic keepings in mind and as one's own (the proper) serve
as the bases for memory. Strangely, through doubles mourning
and suspension allow (con)textual keepings while tending
toward losses. As each double remains lost, ultimate ideals
become uncertain, impossible to conceive.

In chapter one, I argue that Poe's never-ending mourning
disrupts Freud's permanent unconscious such that memory
becomes a process of mourning. I show in the next chapter
that Poe intuitively argues against an ultimate basis for
either faith or doubt. In chapter three, "The Fall of the

House of Usher" provides memorial identifications that allow the unreadable to become readable. The final chapter examines how "Morella" and "Eleonora" contrast the violent excesses stemming from the uncertain adoptions of demonic fears or seraphic hopes.

Implicated in a memorial necrophilia and doubt, the differences of haunting suspensions help place the responsive keepings of memory. Making appearances possible, never-ending mourning and the impossibility of ultimate conception unsettle memory's confidences and convictions.

INTRODUCTION

Penumbra asked Shadow, saying, "Formerly you were
walking on and now you have stopped. Formerly you
were sitting and now you have risen. How is it
that you are so without stability?"
     Shadow replied, "I wait for the movements of
something else to do what I do, and that something
else on which I wait waits further on another to do
as it does. My Waiting: is it for the scales of a
snake or the wings of a cicada? How should I know
why I do one thing and not another?"
     Formerly, I, Chuang Chou, dreamed that I was a
butterfly, a butterfly flying about feeling that it
was enjoying itself. I did not know that it was
Chou. Suddenly I awoke and was myself again, the
veritable Chou. I did not know whether it had
formerly been Chou dreaming that he was a
butterfly, or it was now a butterfly dreaming that
it was Chou. But between Chou and a butterfly
there must be some difference.
     --Chuang Chou, Chaung Tzu: Genius of the Absurd

A Situation of Dilemmas

From the socially constructed pit of the Inquisition to

the natural maelstrom, as an accepted commonplace, Poe's works

concentrate on the effects of absences. In "The Problem of

Poe" Kenneth Dauber situates these effects in a denial of

origins and in the impossibility of thinking of creation: "the

origin, no point of generation, is the system itself, and

Poe's stories . . . quite literally are 'about' nothing,

stories written around a vacancy" (652). Locating "a deferral

1

of meaning" and "deferral of authority" basic to Poe's works (648 & 657), Dauber positions Poe's intellectual views: "If Poe rejects the positivism of the eighteenth century, he rejects the idealism of his own age as well, and in much the same way, by a collapse of reference" (648). Finding that Poe "admits opposing perspectives simultaneously, thus dissolving in the text the very limits by reference to which identity, however unstable, may determine itself" (649), Dauber regards Poe's works as a "pervasive emptiness which American writing must neglect" and "a memory to be lost, a model, even, but not to be imitated" (657). Despite discovering that "Poe's work . . . absorbs all possible readers into itself" (650), the critic recommends a forgetful blindness to "Poe's absorptive technique" although, like T. S. Eliot, Dauber remains unsure whether it exerts influence or not. Thus, Dauber concludes, "Not seeing Poe constitutes the history of American literature in the nineteenth century and perhaps beyond" (657).

Because Poe's works deal with the pains and details of mourning and doubt, their memorials remain easily forgotten and neglected and seemingly better repressed. This attitude engages many problems of the questing hero covered in Ernest Becker's The Denial of Death. Whether credible or incredible, Poe's texts insinuate a heterogeneous doubling tending toward the losses of trust and death. Unsettling confidence and conviction, the gaps of conceptual impossibility and everlasting and never-ending mourning interrupt the "heroic"

affirmations of absolute certainty and ultimate assurance. Despite fears of some deflation or paralytic corrosion radiating from this referential collapse, the agnostic attention to losses does not destroy all contextual relations. Although their final status remains undecidable, I argue, suspended phantasms emerge through the haunted and haunting layers of inheritances and memorial keepings that make possible the strange regards of reading and responsive actions. Admittedly, these possibilities function contextually rather than absolutely. Poe's texts doubly reflect skeptical doubts and, derived from dreamy reveries, mournful distrusts.

Although straining to impose an equivalence in lieu of a strange irreconcilability, in <u>American Hieroglypics</u> John Irwin considers Poe's "odd equation of death and the abyss" (187):

> The abyss is, after all, the endless, the limitless—it is infinity; while death is the absolute limit of human consciousness. What accounts for this equation is the fact that an absolute limit and the absolutely limitless are equally impossible for the human mind to conceive. (187-88)

While any equation between death and the abyss must remain indeterminable, the losses of these recessive tendencies toward conceptual impossibilities suspend ultimate foundations. For self-consciousness, Irwin tries to situate the effects of mediation and opposition: "Self-consciousness is, then, the recognition (in both senses of the word) of nonrecognition, the simultaneous constitution of both a polar opposition and the condition of mediation" (182). While

mediation tends toward heterogeneous suspensions, opposition
tends toward heterogeneous doublings. Before turning to
Narcissus's fantasy of depth, a problem I see as similar to
that haunting readers, Irwin considers the uncertain networks
of oppositions that double and split:

> The attempt to divide a mutually constitutive opposition
> and completely separate the opposing terms from each
> other always turns into a splitting/doubling, as if one
> tried to separate the north and south poles of a bar
> magnet by sawing the bar in half, only to find that
> instead of separating the poles one had produced two new
> bar magnets, each with its own north and south poles. Or
> to phrase it another way, the splitting of a mutually
> constitutive opposition is like the dividing of an
> amoeba: halving is doubling. . . . It is this
> simultaneous internal splitting / external doubling that
> renders the notion of a limit problematic in a mutually
> constitutive opposition. For example, in the opposition
> between body and shadow, there is an essential (that is,
> original) uncertainty as to whether the dividing line
> between the two should be interpreted as an internal or
> an external limit, whether the line should be read
> metonymically (as the internal boundary between two
> halves of a whole--splitting) or metaphorically (as the
> external boundary between two similar wholes--doubling).
> (156)

Because Irwin finds the doubling of body and shadow as a
"governing image" in Poe (193), his example reflects "the
dizzying realization that this internal limit _is_ the self's
external limit, that the self as image cannot pass the
reflecting surface, cannot pass the image as boundary" (157).
Although hampered by equations, magnets, and amoebas, Irwin
appreciates the indeterminacy and uncertainty that strangely
accompanies Poe's contexts with haunting suspensions.

Poe finds many abstract terms or mere words lacking any
demonstrable referent. This lack of sensible referent leads

to a regression toward conceptual impossibility and creates inconsistencies for attempts to establish proper identities or distinctions based on such terms. These aborted efforts drive thoughts and emotions, fancies and imaginations into hallucinatory doublings with the losses of doubt and death. As these ruined threads hold Poe's aesthetic intuition of mournful skepticism at stake, attention to his intellectual doubts and his emotional engagements with death and dreamy reveries helps resolve his double approach to loss.

Pursuing his intellectual case against placing faith in any allegedly complete conception of "infinity," Poe regards, first, the human demand for relation that calls for attempts at conceiving such ideas and, second, the presuppositions for conceiving such an idea. The inability to distinguish the genuine from the counterfeit serves as an example for any faith or belief trying to found itself on an original or first cause through logical proof or empirical demonstration.

First, Poe recognizes the powerful effects of the lack of a demonstrable object or origin in language. Considering ever-regressing ideas or terms, like infinity, as the thought of a thought, Poe notes the sensible boundary of the visible:

> Let us begin, then, at once, with that merest of words, "Infinity." This, like " God," "spirit," and some other expressions of which the equivalents exist in all languages, is by no means the expression of an idea--but of an effort at one. It stands for the possible attempt at an impossible conception. Man needed a term by which to point out the <u>direction</u> of this effort--the cloud behind which lay, forever invisible, the <u>object</u> of this attempt. A word, in fine, was demanded, by means of which one human being might put himself in relation at

> once with another human being and with a certain <u>tendency</u> of the human intellect. Out of this demand arose the word, "Infinity;" which is thus the representative but of the <u>thought of a thought</u>. (XVI 200)[*]

A word like death or truth does not express an idea. It reflects an effort at an idea or a tendency toward an idea. The use of the word leaves the goal of the word unobtained. A sensible idea lies past the reach of human senses. A relational need or demand calls for a human to enter into a structured involvement with a different human through these linguistic or expressive words whose clouded or veiled objects must remain forever uncertain. Due to the lack of any demonstrable reference, this view of language regards terms without an apparent object as uncertain and circumscribed by a negative limit. The idea or ideal whose final object stays forever out of sight and sense reflects an inherited tendency of linguistic or expressive attempts to conceptualize the inconceivable, and these traditional intellectual attempts, these ever-regressing thoughts of thoughts, have powerful and even violent effects among human relations and contexts as the endeavors to find a final assurance press toward an unreachable certainty, the impossible conception. This "loss" of the desired idea engages the dynamics of mourning with its

----

[*]   Citations of Poe's works from James A. Harrison's edition will appear with a Roman numeral referring to the volume before the page number. Sources from Ostrom or Mabbott use Arabic numbers before the page number.

deceptions of attaining the impossible and helps structure approaches to the desired idea through tendencies within human relations.[1] As a narrator, Poe certainly has no privileged viewpoint from which to regard the dynamics of these ultimately untenable tendencies, but emotionally and intellectually, his texts inscribe a determined interest and fascination with the myriad implications of the ways various conceptions approach the limits of nothing and death.

Second, according to Poe, the conceptual deception of obtaining a formed idea arises from a mental fancy that entertains the conveyance or conversion of the impossible into the possible. By looking at the connection of the infinite with the finite, Poe traces out the psychological and intellectual processes that entertain the fantasy of properly possessing an ultimate certainty:

> A mind not thoroughly self-conscious--not accustomed to the introspective analysis of its own operations--will, it is true, often deceive itself by supposing that it _has_ entertained the conception of which we speak. In the effort to entertain it, we proceed step beyond step--we fancy point still beyond point; and so long as we _continue_ the effort, it may be said, in fact, that we are _tending_ to the formation of the idea designated; while the strength of the impression that we actually form or have formed it, is in the ratio of the period during which we keep up the mental endeavor. But it is in the act of discontinuing the endeavor--of fulfilling (as we think) the idea--of putting the finishing stroke (as we suppose) to the conception--that we overthrow at once the whole fabric of our fancy by resting upon one ultimate and therefore definite point. This fact, however, we fail to perceive, on account of the absolute coincidence, in time, between the settling down upon the ultimate point and the act of cessation in thinking.--In attempting, on the one hand, to frame the idea of a

<u>limited</u> space, we merely converse the processes which involve the impossibility. (XVI 202-3)

Thinking or supposing that we (Poe includes himself) put the finishing stroke on a conception or fulfill an idea overthrows the deceptively whole fabric by, at once, discontinuing or interrupting the endeavor and resting upon a fancied ultimate point. The strength and time spent in keeping up the endeavor, the settling down upon the fancied final point, and the cessation in thinking contribute to the deception of converting the impossible. A similar overthrow awaits the deception of reaching any ultimate point.

Still, the tendencies toward the conception of possibilities pursue the impossible. However, the impossibility of conceiving the ultimate infinite or finite, like the finality of death or life, remains, Poe might claim, not conversed. This failure of ideal conception, due to the remaining impossibility stretching forever past the cessation of an endeavor, has many apparently mournful and unsettling effects on the proprieties of framing and limits of conceptual and abstract knowledge. This remaining impossibility brings into question the very mourning or loss of ideals. The concepts of loss depend on contextual terms that themselves disappear into loss.

Emotionally and intellectually, it seems impossible to mourn the impossible. If ideals stay forever unattainable, then the very ideal basis for reckoning loss itself becomes lost in advance. This loss of even the notion of loss aborts

in advance not only appropriation, but also disappropriation, and unsettles not only resistance to loss, but also any alleged acceptance of loss. As the loss of loss, this problem with ideality might have led Poe to turn to intuitive tastes and the "keeping" of aesthetics for his images of mourning.

This failure ruptures the fancied or imagined deception framing any final or ultimate idea or ideal, even that of loss. In relation to such terms, no point rests with an assured certainty. The difference between the real and the fake coin illustrates Poe's questioning of the distinctions between the genuine and the counterfeit in the absence of any demonstrable original. In a review of <u>Human Magnetism</u> by W. Newnham, Poe finds a variant of begging the question that he calls begging the admission:

> Counterfeit coin is said to prove the existence of genuine--but this is no more than the truism that there can be no counterfeit where there is no genuine--just as there can be no badness where there is no goodness--the considerations being purely relative; but, <u>because</u> there can be no counterfeit where there is no original, does it in any manner follow that any undemonstrated original exists? In seeing a piece of gold we know it to be counterfeit by coins <u>admitted</u> to be genuine; but were <u>no</u> coin admitted to be genuine, how should we establish the counterfeit, and what right should we have to speak of counterfeits at all? (XII 122)

This illustration suggests how the negation and absence of any original seem to lead to a lack of proof or demonstration for Poe. Nothing provides no basis for comparison or contrast (pardon the double negative). Because many notions that depend on what culture deems properly meaningful lack such proof or demonstration, Poe found himself critical of many

socially accepted values, and yet he still had to endure in society and to function politely with those who hold such undemonstrable notions and values. The predicament of simulation becomes how to act as if the undemonstrated, at least, appears demonstrated. For a writer dependent for his livelihood on his readers, this problem of receptions becomes particularly critical.

The failure of conceptual certainty aborts the societal proper with never-ending ruptures of loss. Striving for impossible closure, the fancied or imagined tendency toward the formation of the idea has certain structural features that mark the attempt, human relations, and the intellect. Much remains at stake in preserving the commonly shared conceptual borders of conceivability in their so-called place, even if their tradition opens upon grave impossibilities. As cultural and social mores and orthodoxies, these inherited margins of conventional propriety designate at once the acceptable, ultimate, and proper foci of conception and those limits at which acceptable thinking may cease.

Poe finds a model for death in dreamless sleep. Poe believes hypnogogic reveries and dreams approach the absence of individual identities more clearly than waking states. In "The Colloquy of Monos and Una," Monos explains that "by sleep and its world alone is <u>Death</u> imaged" (IV 211). Philippe Ariès in his excellent sociological and historical study of Western European culture's funeral attitudes and practices, <u>The Hour</u>

of Our Death, notes the almost universal acceptance of this association: "The idea of sleep is the most ancient, the most popular, and the most constant image of the beyond" (24). A wide variety of cultural perspectives accepts this association.[2]

In a remarkable section of Marginalia, Poe accepts the seemingly impossible challenge of articulating hypnogogic reveries or dreamy "fancies" into language: "Now, so entire is my faith in the power of words, that, at times, I have believed it possible to embody even the evanescence of fancies such as I have attempted to describe" (XVI 89). Still, he admits his abortive failure: "There is, however, a class of fancies, of exquisite delicacy, which are not thoughts, and to which, as yet, I have found it absolutely impossible to adapt language" (XVI 88). Recognizing that the term "fancy" does not even remotely apply to these psychic "shadows of shadows in question" (XVI 88), Poe acknowledges only the initial difficulties of this conveyance or adoption into words, this embodiment.

Requiring the most intense tranquility of the soul and perfect mental and bodily health, these "supernal" fancies or reveries arise "at those mere points of time where the confines of the waking world blend with those of the world of dreams" (XVI 88). Poe regards these pleasurable ecstacies as "a glimpse of the spirit's outer world" and tries to relate their strange sensibility by claiming, "It is as if the five

senses were supplanted by five myriad others alien to mortality" (XVI 89). Not lucid dreams, however; Poe notes that "I am aware of these 'fancies' only when I am upon the very brink of sleep, with the consciousness that I am so" (XVI 88). If, as Freud claims, the unconscious expresses itself with few inhibitions in dreams, these reveries might also provide an access into usually neglected regions of the mind between unconscious dreams and conscious awareness. Having developed the ability under favorable conditions of inducing these reveries, Poe's problem at the limit becomes conveying or conversing these supervening fancies into words:

> Not that I can <u>continue</u> the condition--not that I can render the point more than a point--but that I can startle myself from the point into wakefulness--<u>and thus transfer the point itself into the realm of Memory</u>-- convey its impressions, or more properly their recollections, to a situation where (although still for a very brief period) I can survey them with the eye of analysis. (XVI 90)

While the success of such an imaginary transference or conveyance remains negatively limited by the not "as yet," the embodiment in words or analysis of these points of reveries presupposes the mediating function of memory or recollection.

As an art of embodying loss, memory marks many of Poe's more imaginative textual efforts with a memorial melancholy. In faulting Locke and Leibniz for misapprehending the faculty of memory, Poe claims that it "is neither primitive nor independent," but "exists in conjunction with each primitive faculty, and inseparable from it" (IX 65). These encompassing "dim but ever present <u>memories</u>" suspend between

the haunted dreams of youth and a "Destiny more vast--very distant in the by-gone time, and infinitely awful" (XVI 311-12).

John Irwin recognizes the memorial importance of loss for reading effected by attention's wavering between fancy and imagination: "What these periodic losses of memory involve is not the loss of the physical inscriptions of historical memory (writing, artifacts, and so on) but the loss of the ability to read or recognize these inscriptions, the ability to interpret them correctly" (174).   In opposition to remembrance, forgetting has a double relation to death as material dissolution, "the self's external limit," and as "the self's internal limit, its principle of differentiation" (175). Calling attention to the active forgetting that makes memory possible, Irwin speculates that the excesses of "[a] memory that retains everything and a memory that retains almost nothing amount finally to the same thing--the collapse of signification" (178).   Irwin then argues that as material memorials surviving the ability to read them, undecipherable and cryptic inscriptions become disturbing "because here writing seems to commemorate its own inability by itself to transmit memory, its status not as a substitute for memory but simply as an aid to memory" (179).   Although Irwin turns to the "radical discontinuities in history," the supplemental keeping of "the memory of that forgetting" opens onto grave and haunting suspensions and ruptures any fantasy of constancy

and coherence by indicating its "large, unbridgeable gaps" (179). Thus, at the limits of doubt and mourning, Poe's works commemorate the ever-open discontinuities of context many would prefer to forget; as Irwin reads it: "<u>Self-recognition is a reflected mirroring, a foreshadowed doubling, that allows vision to turn back on itself and recognize its own state of nonrecognition, to remember its own forgetfulness, to know death</u>" (182).

Although this conjecture on hypnogogic revery does not operate as the focus of my dissertation and becomes relegated to the background, this fusion of death, revery, and art persists in powerfully influencing my readings.[3] Struck by the supremeness or the absoluteness of the novelty of the element and materials of these strange reveries, Poe feels that had he succeeded in conveying them, he could have forced the world to acknowledge that he had "done an original thing" (XVI 90).

The ideal in Poe's texts connects closely to the imaginative. I argue that they function synonymously. In his review of Thomas Moore's <u>Alciphron: A Poem</u>, Poe discriminates between fancy and imagination by criticizing Coleridge's terms:

> "The fancy," says the author of the "Ancient Mariner" in his <u>Biographia Literaria</u>, "the fancy combines, the imagination creates." And this was intended, and has been received, as a distinction. If so at all, it is one without a difference; without even a difference of <u>degree</u>. The fancy as nearly creates as the imagination; and neither creates in any respect. All novel

conceptions are merely unusual combinations. The mind of man can _imagine_ nothing which has not really existed; and this point is susceptible of the most positive demonstration--see the Baron de Bielfeld, in his "Premiers Traits de L'Erudition Universelle," 1767. It will be said, perhaps, that we can imagine a _griffin_, and that a griffin does not exist. Not the griffin certainly, but its component parts. It is a mere compendium of known limbs and features--of known qualities. Thus with all which seems to be _new_--which appears to be a _creation_ of intellect. It is resoluble into the old. The wildest and most vigorous effort of mind cannot stand the test of this analysis.

We might make a distinction, _of degree_, between the fancy and the imagination, in saying that the latter is the former _loftily employed_. But experience proves this distinction to be unsatisfactory. What we _feel_ and _know_ to be fancy, will be found still only _fanciful_, whatever be the theme which engages it. It retains its idiosyncrasy under all circumstances. No _subject_ exalts it into the ideal. (X 61-62)

Both imagination and fancy combine the felt and the known into novel arrangements and do not converse the impossible. All alleged creations of originality or genius (allied to _sui genius_) can resolve into collocations of old and known contexts. Thus, little new or novel appears. However, Poe suggests that some possibility for originality might occur at the strange and dreamy limit of ideal imagination. To underscore the ruined distinction, Poe asserts that the mind of man can imagine _nothing_ that has not already existed. Analysis can supposedly resolve the components of alleged creations. Although Poe finds the distinction between fancy and imagination ultimately unsatisfactory, he keeps using the terms in his tales. Later, in the review Poe identifies the imaginative with the ideal and suggestive under-current in a

work and the fanciful with the transparent, perhaps, brilliant upper-current.

In a footnote to his "Drake-Halleck" review Poe indicates the negation that the imagination encounters by cautiously likening the artist to god:

> Imagination is, possibly in man, a lesser degree of the creative power of God. What the Deity imagines, is, but was not before. What man imagines, is, but was also. The mind of man cannot imagine what is not. This latter point may be demonstrated.--See Les Premiers Traits de L'Erudition Universelle, par M. Le Baron de Bielfield, 1767. (VIII 283)

Although no matter of degree exists between fancy and imagination, a matter of degree may exist between the creations of god and man. God can perhaps imagine what was not, but man can only imagine what was. What man imagines of the unknown or hypothetical functions as a different, contextual arrangement of the already known. Any fascination with an original creativity ex nihilo appears perverse in Poe's sense of the term, but the imagination may suggest or hint at the negative through an arrangement of known elements. Persistently, Poe's texts limit man from encountering or reaching the negation of nothing.

Poe's imagination depends on his notion of the ideal and also capacitates a doubled reading. In one sense it recuperates the spiritual and mystical values of the social context in which Poe finds himself situated. In a different sense it connects to the unconvertible limit of impossibility.

Not mutually inconsistent, these senses merge in Poe's development of hypnogogic reveries and dreams.

The most frequently cited source for Poe's first sense of the ideal comes from his review of <u>Alciphron</u> by Moore. Poe situates the ideal by claiming that "the just distinction between the fancy and the imagination" lies within the <u>mystic</u> as employed by some German critics (X 65):

> It is applied by them to that class of compositions in which there lies beneath the transparent upper current of meaning an under or <u>suggestive</u> one. What we vaguely term the <u>moral</u> of any sentiment is its mystic or secondary expression. It has the vast force of an accompaniment in music. It vivifies the air; that spiritualizes the <u>fanciful</u> conception, and lifts it into the <u>ideal</u>. (X 65)

Thus, as the moral of any sentiment, the secondary expression of the mystic might convey a fanciful composition into the ideal, a transparent conception into the suggestive. Referring to Shelley's "The Sensitive Plant" and De La Motte Foque's <u>Undine</u>, Poe affirms that "These two latter poems (for we call them both such) are the finest possible examples of the purely <u>ideal</u>" (X 66). That his suggestion of the negative also seems to approach an abyssal absence or ghostly void, as well as perfection, does not always register. Poe continues:

> There is little of fancy here, and everything of imagination. With each note of the lyre is heard a ghostly, not always a distinct, but an august and soul-exciting <u>echo</u>. In every glimpse of beauty presented, we catch, through long and wild vistas, dim bewildering visions of a far more ethereal beauty <u>beyond</u>. But not so in poems which the world has always persisted in terming <u>fanciful</u>. Here the upper is often brilliant and beautiful; but then men <u>feel</u> that this upper <u>is all</u>. No Naiad voice addresses them <u>from below</u>. The notes of the air of the song do not tremble with the according tones of the accompaniment. (X 66)

The ideal as an indistinct and haunted echo vivifies and thrills the soul. Apparently, past the transparent and through long, wild vistas, dim visions bewilder those who approach the ideal, but this mystic ideal always seems to accompany fancy even though the ethereal beauty beyond causes its surface to tremble. Thus the fancy gets identified with the transparency of meaning and the ideal imagination with the suggestive and moral. This ethereal beauty remains suggestively unspecified.

From the reviews of the novels, George Balcombe and Night and Morning, a less frequently cited passage focuses on the negativity of the ideal:

> Original characters, so-called, can only be critically praised as such, either when presenting qualities known in real life, but never before depicted, (a combination nearly impossible) or when presenting qualities (moral, or physical, or both) which although unknown, or even known to be hypothetical, are so skillfully adapted to the circumstances which surround them, that our sense of fitness is not offended, and we find ourselves seeking a reason why these things might not have been, which we are still satisfied are not. The later species of originality appertains to the loftier regions of the Ideal. (IX 261-62)

Thus, one fabricates the ideal from things that one can be satisfied are not. Having abandoned rational consistency, as seen for example in his handling of the perverse, Poe can maintain that "The mind of man cannot imagine what is not" (VIII 283) and also remain satisfied that some things "are not." In compositions one can draw these ideal things from the hypothetical or unknown by puzzling on the possible reasons why such things might not have been. While the

imaginative can subsume this ideal, this passage stresses the mystic less and a relation to the absent and negation more. The search for reasons why such things might not have been separates an unreified absence into possibilities of the lost. Sensitized to loss, the possibilities of doubt and grief can get arranged so as to become indistinct toward a negativity seemingly without end. This search borders on the possible which is not. Originality becomes virtually impossible in such a system, and thus the reference to originality remains alleged or so-called only. These passages support a less transcendent notion of the ideal more closely aligned with the absent in Poe's works. Although Poe admits that no adequate proof or demonstration marks the ultimate difference between imagination and fancy, he keeps the terms because he intuitively feels and knows the difference. This intuition might well stem from an appreciation of the suggestiveness of the negative as articulated through emotional mournings and intellectual skepticisms. Designed for readers, whether credible or incredible, this double idealism operates aesthetically or imaginatively.

Concerning the aesthetic possibilities of the fancied attempt to embody loss into words, Poe records the process for displacing the passions of mourning into poetry in a review of some works by Mrs. Amelia Welby:

> Mrs. Welby's theme is, therefore, radically faulty so far as originality is concerned;--but of common themes, it is one of the very best among the class <u>passionate</u>. True passion is prosaic--homely. Any strong mental emotion

> stimulates <u>all</u> the mental faculties; thus grief the imagination:--but in proportion as the effect is strengthened, the cause surceases. The excited fancy triumphs--the grief is subdued--chastened,--is no longer grief. In this mood we are poetic, and it is clear that a poem now written will be poetic in the exact ratio of its dispassion. A passionate poem is a contradiction in terms. (XVI 56)

Commingling fancy and imagination, this process converts the familiar, passionate, prosaic, and homely into the strange, dispassionate, poetic, and unhomely. The passionate endeavor to strengthen the impressions of loss ceases with the discontinuation of the endeavor. Then, loss may get written into the poem. Deceptively, the fabric of fancy seems to triumph by fulfilling its conception or adding the finishing strokes to the idea of elegiac loss. Registering on the dispassionate poetic object, the endeavor seems doubly to convey the impossibility of loss, both as a fancied recuperation of proper social reassurances of the ultimate continuation of the soul and as a mortal cessation of thought at attempting to conceive the impossible. Like Freud's uncanny, a strange loss or mourning haunts the objects of displacement or sublimation unless fancy comes, almost magically, to claim a chaste and proper triumph over grief. Underscoring the strange problems of conceptualization, this aesthetics of loss typifies Poe's creative processes, an imaginative process based on the suggestiveness of the negative.

Pursuing this dubious creative process seems to bring the artist back to the mental emotion he never left, melancholic

grief.   In "The Philosophy of Composition," striving after ideal poetic beauty, Poe touches upon what he feels and thinks demonstrates the most supreme subject in keeping with his theory of composition:

> Now, never losing sight of the object <u>supremeness</u>, or perfection, at all points, I asked myself--"Of all melancholy topics, what, according, to the <u>universal</u> understanding of mankind, is the <u>most</u> melancholy?" Death --was the obvious reply. "And when," I said, "is the most melancholy of topics most poetical?" From what I have already explained at some length, the answer, here also, is obvious--"When it most closely allies itself to <u>Beauty:</u> the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world--and equally is it beyond doubt that the lips best suited for such topic are those of a bereaved lover." (XIV 201)

Although this combination of beauty and death appears as a common <u>topos</u>, the specifics of the inferences do not seem obvious without the context of Poe's feelings and thoughts about beloved loss. As a response to the impossibility of conveying absence and the tendencies toward doubt and mourning, the dreamy conversion from the shadows of "<u>Mournful and Never-ending Remembrance</u>" into an aesthetic resounds through most of the reflective doublings and echoes of Poe's art (XIV 208).   These reflective losses accompany the questioning feelings and doubts of the bereaved mourner. The pursuit of melancholic beauty intellectually and emotionally displaces the impossibility of conveying the imperceptible disappearance of the beloved through the sensitive dreams of fancy and imagination.

Following the directions these intellectual and emotional dilemmas take, an extended example emerges in <u>Eureka</u> as Poe

discusses infinity in terms of its alleged origin, the theological First Cause which "is made to support now Finity and now Infinity" (XVI 202). His intuitive tendencies toward a faith in a poetic and aesthetic divine heart, which upholds our own, reflect a response to this predicament (XVI 311). Accepting a theological distinction prompted by skepticism, Poe differentiates between faith and intellectual belief:

> We _believe_ in a God. We may or may not _believe_ in finite or in infinite space; but our belief, in such cases, is more properly designated as _faith_, and is a matter quite distinct from that belief proper--from that _intellectual_ belief--which presupposes the mental conception. (XVI 203)

Eureka's cosmology stretches a presupposed intellectual belief in astronomy into a poetic and intuitive faith about the universe. Note also the plural pronoun which, while including the poetic narrator himself, unspecifically suspends the group referred to between some group of believers which may or may not include the reader. As shown, some intellectual beliefs lead to conceptual impossibility. Apart from claims of fact or fiction, his intuitive and poetic treatment of context remains closer to faith than belief.

Thus, the logic of Poe's works persistently attempts to circulate around losses of doubt and mourning. These different losses effect and affect the trust needed for faith and belief. The memorial effects of these losses appear in relations, human bodies, feelings, thoughts, ideas, and languages, and in an additional sense, these losses appear in Poe's aesthetic theories and creative efforts. As a haunting

suspension, his logic works between losses critically on the culturally valued proper, property, and whatever one might think one "has." Insofar as, through its reflections, a reading discounts or eludes an attempt to accept these losses, this logic implies problems of constancy, coherence, and consistency for readers and readings. In its reflective search for support, reading mirrors the readers' acceptances and resistances to loss. Aesthetically, these suggestions of negativity emphasize the structures of intellectual doubt and emotional mourning embodied within Poe's stories.

A Reading of Dilemmas

> I know I am writing nonsense, but then you must forgive me for the very reason that I know it.
> --Edgar Allan Poe, "Sheppard Lee"

Poe had many traumatic encounters with death and absence. Biographies yield a litany of lost loves: his father at 21 months (David Poe vanished around this time for unknown reasons); critically, his mother at 35 months; the beloved mother of a friend at 15 years; his motherly protector at 20 years; his brother at 22; his fatherly "protector" at 25; and his beloved wife at 38.[4] Undoubtably, these final separations, often followed by periods of abuse, traumatically influenced him. Presumably, the commonplace of Poe's

fascination with death centers around such personal events, but as a college-educated and culturally-engaged critic, Poe also registers these sorrows as significant sociological, psychological, and philosophic indicators of loss through his writings. These emotional and intellectual bereavements disturb his sense of trust and control, and reflecting more general cultural difficulties, these oral and anal developmental problems find elaboration in his works.

Explicitly, in <u>Visionary Compacts</u> Donald Pease articulates a common response to Poe's critical attitude:

> According to the psychic bargain struck in most works of mourning, the mourner agrees to let go of the person mourned in exchange for a memory. Referential language, insofar as it presupposes the absence of the person from the word representing this person, socializes separation. But Poe's writings do not agree with this substitution. Representational language performs a necessary cultural task. It permits a separation from other persons that results in individuals. Representations permit persons to confirm their independence from one another by displacing one another's presence with words that make actual presence unnecessary. In Poe's works, however, words disintegrate into letters, sheer material impressions bereft of their power to represent. Poe thereby breaks the verbal contract constitutive of a culture of individuals. In the process of writing, he produces words without the power to refer and persons without the power to reflect and thereby empties persons and characters out of the actual world and into a world of memory. Instead of establishing a cultural contract with the world, Poe destroys the grounds upon which all other cultural contracts base their claims, leaving only the faculty of perversity in the wake of this dissolution. (187-88)

Although it remains unclear as to whose pragmatic economy of exchange warrants this exchange of a person for a memory and how the representational recognition of an individual's actual presence might function without memory, Pease seems to respond

to the critique of Poe's doubts by regarding them as perverse, disintegrating, dissolving, and emptying in relation to his notion of the social contract. In order to prove memory's incompatibility with the world, Pease sees Poe replacing "characters capable of being preserved as persons in memory with doubles" (188).

In keeping with the company of many marginally canonized authors, Poe's addictions and obsessions serve as much to highlight symptoms of larger social tensions, as to disqualify his work from serious academic consideration. Many biographies and most critical studies speculate excessively on these improprieties and gloss over the more serious cultural implications of Poe's losses. Instead of directly joining these conjectures, I will try to read closely three tales of death(s) in relation to Poe's cosmology and criticism in order to tie down to his texts some psychological and philosophic consequences of Poe's cultural and artistic views of mourning and doubt.

This technique places in different perspectives many of the emotionally charged allegations of debauchery, madness, and impropriety that usually accompany critical and biographical readings. Due to their own agendas, such readings often obscure the culturally significant points and details embodied in the ways that Poe's texts try to address the dilemmas of loss and mourning.

This dissertation will assume that if anything appears certain, it remains the inevitability of death for each of us.[5] Since it seems impossible for each of us to know or experience our own death, this impossible limit for conception and feeling remains our only certainty. This unknowable verge engages powerful philosophic and psychological forces and implications that structurally unsettle any attempt to construct an ultimately consistent and coherent subject or meaning. Poe's works encounter these limits to distinctness and reconcilability through mourning and doubt.

My thesis both does not and does make a difference. Hardly original, novel, or unique, it changes neither the forces or values at large and in general. In this sense it makes no difference at all. If it makes a difference, that difference stems from the implications of subtracting the impossibility of ultimate conception from the nonsensible, proper ideals and attending to what remains: ghost effects and the suspensions of the between. Doubtfully, it begins to grieve the loss of the coherence and consistency of the same and, from indistinct ruins, to enfold an emergent and melancholy similarity, the simulacrum. Ghastfully, it begins to question the cherished constancy of the proper identity which we believe that we can fundamentally have and, from conceptual abortion, to adapt to an inherited necromancy. The obviousness of the ghostly suspension of conception and perception making an inherited difference almost insures that

it will remain overlooked, for as Poe's Dupin claims: "'Perhaps the mystery is a little <u>too</u> plain'" (VI 29). Most important, my argument recalls difference (<u>dis</u> + <u>ferre</u>) in terms of an opposition to bearing or carrying except as a phantasm, a fancy, or an imagination. Thus, this thesis makes a difference with difference.

Derived from this inherited difference without and with a difference, Poe's texts mark the ghosts of mourning and the betweens of doubt. Attempting to grapple with an indistinct irreconcilability, the phantasmic duplications of memories and dreams embody and reflect the uncertain dilemmas of ultimately unfounded conceptions and perceptions, feelings and thoughts. Prompted by Poe's texts, my first chapter considers several psychoanalytic theories of mourning and/or melancholia to help explicate some structural effects of oral distrust and contrast Poe's and psychoanalysis's treatments of memory. Drawing on Richard Popkin's notion of fideistic skepticism, my second chapter looks at Poe's familiarity with skeptical writers and some literary studies attending to his doubts. Based on Poe's pantheistic intuition that the fancy of material observation or natural philosophy might increase human morality by analogy, mourning and doubt appear as <u>topoi</u> that, depending on a responsive reader's identifications, suggest ethical responsibilities. Thus, "The Fall of the House of Usher" illustrates the ways ghost effects and suspensions might effect reader identification, and then using

this reader identification, "Morella" and "Eleonora" depict the affective consequences of the characters' contrasting tendencies toward cryptic concentrations and necrophiliac diffusions. Commingling resistant closeness and accepting openness, reflection and embodiment become violent in excess.

The works of J. Gerald Kennedy suggest that the pursuit of Abraham and Torok's approach to Poe's mourning might benefit the field of Poe studies, and with luck, several such works shall appear shortly.[6] These studies tend to regard mourning and its anasemic effects on language. By helping provide a structure for the memories of an encrypted loss around the disappearance that functions both as a secret and as a resolution to the tensions between incorporation and introjection, the psychoanalysts' theories interest some Poe scholars. The works of G. R. Thompson, Stanley Cavell, and, more recently, Joan Dayan approach Poe through notions from the history of ideas, and as readers they have detected a melancholy or bitter skepticism in Poe's texts.[7] Here, his emotional and intellectual predicament reflects the loss of ideals and rational constancy.

These writers have acknowledged the intellectual or philosophic and the emotional or psychoanalytic impacts of loss on Poe's writings. Skepticism and psychoanalysis help structure these analyses and considerations of doubt and mourning in Poe's work because they provide systematic and discursive structures with which to approach the (con)textual

issues of loss. To help the reader better appreciate the contexts of mourning and skepticism, the first two chapters provide the backgrounds relevant to this reading of Poe.

Derived from the memories and the architectonics of landscapes and buildings, the limited narrative viewpoints engage the tensions between introjection and incorporation and between skepticism and idealism in "The Fall of the House of Usher," "Morella," and "Eleonora." The haunted and excessively violent meanings of these texts have philosophic and psychological implications, especially some moral and ethical issues. These particular tales appear because each narrator contributes a critically different viewpoint by exemplifying a range of the intellectual and emotional reactions to doubt and the death of a beloved.

As developed above, a similarity between the discontinuation of an endeavor and an attempt toward an idea in the face of impossibility of attainment marks the emotional and intellectual developments in most of Poe's imaginative works. Each of Poe's three tales situates and structures the effects of this break or discontinuity differently. Stemming from conceptions and perceptions heterogeneously mediated, a fog of impossibility always circulates around the mystery or secret of shadows and death. This mysterious absence connected to memorial reveries or dreams stimulates the narrator's imaginative or fanciful participation or witnessing. Marked by dysfunction, a mysterious criminality

accompanies the always excessive violence of any endeavor.
Strange and ghastly dislocations or migrations from a domicile
stimulate selectively the emotional and intellectual
flexibilities of memory. Thus mirrored through the selective
architectonics of a tale, the memories of the narrator and the
reader's reflections collude and collaborate as ruined
attempts to converse the impossible, to reach the ideal secret
of death. As such, the endeavor fails, but the attempt leaves
discernable structural effects. This attempt registers on the
narrator's viewpoint as suggested by James W. Gargano in his
essay "The Question of Poe's Narrators":

> Poe's narrators should not be construed as his
> mouthpieces; instead, they should be regarded as
> expressing, in "charged" language indicative of their own
> internal disturbances, their own peculiarly nightmarish
> visions. Poe, I contend, is conscious of the
> abnormalities of his narrators and does not condone the
> intellectual ruses through which they strive, only too
> earnestly, to justify themselves. (27)

Although the question of Poe's normality, coherence, or sanity
remains far from resolved, his "wildly incoherent" narrators'
viewpoints reflect the inconsistent effects of their own
endeavors to establish a certainty in the face of the
impossibility of death. The selections from the criticisms
indicate that Poe, at least, notes some of the impossibilities
of conception that his narrators articulate and seem to
undergo.

Jonathan Auerbach's The Romance of Failure sees the early
Poe as intuiting that:

> writing is a self-sustaining form of discourse which
> acquires currency apart from the person or authority of
> the writer, who threatens to fade into obscurity as soon
> as his work enters the public domain. Once the author
> expresses himself in public, his written identity becomes
> common property, subject to ceaseless duplication and
> appropriation. (52)

Moreover, with Poe's tendency to conflate cause and effect, the artist and the artistic product, Auerbach finds that "Poe converts the process of writing into reading: the author must assume the role of his reader in order to foresee the temporal outcome of his as yet uncreated creation" (39). In order to foresee any outcome sensitively, the author adopts the appropriations and duplications of many readers.

Struggling with incompleteness and imperfection, a writer/reader appears dumb before the unfounded and theme-filled context, as Poe claims in Marginalia, "first from not knowing how to begin, where there seems eternally beginning behind beginning, and secondly from perceiving his true end at so infinite a distance" (XVI 127). Lost to absolute meaning, this working with contextuality accounts for Auerbach's observation that "Poe seems more interested in systematically exploring the process of composing, or decomposing, than he is in arriving at any particular goal that thought may tend toward" (36). If so, a similar contextuality affects and effects interpretative readings.

In "Edgar Allan Poe: The Error of Reading and the Reading of Error," Joseph G. Kronick finds that "To read Poe . . . is to confound the familiar with the hidden" because Poe analyzes

rather than presents his own ingenuity for interpretation
(26). Taking analysis as exposing the obvious, "what lies in
plain view--that is the impenetrability of the familiar" (26),
Kronick notes two ways of effecting an interpretation, one
tending toward materiality and the second toward the psychic.
As fantasies of contextual transcendence, both become "a
product of the error of profundity, the confusion of
significance with depth" (25). He explains this narcissism of
interpretation: "In one case, the reader confounds Poe's texts
with their effects, and in the other, the reader confounds the
effects with his own ingenious interpretation" (25). These
double tendencies help situate a reader's identifications. In
describing what he takes as Roderick Usher's "paranoia,"
Auerbach explains what might well apply to the reader's
doubling and splitting in striving to grasp the excess of
textual meaning:

> The subject projects his own meaning onto a mysterious
> world to recover a transcendent text, or a text that
> seems to escape transcendence. Conscious of his own
> interpretative designs, the subject splits in two,
> generating a second self mocking the attempt to
> comprehend the whole. . . . Self-censorship, in turn,
> fuels the impulse to conceal loss and inadequacy by
> discharging these feelings outside the self. The double
> is killed and buried. . . . Yet the urge to obliterate
> self-consciousness only redoubles subjectivity, until the
> isolated criminal is obliged to confess to another that
> his flawed schemes are excited by his own inexpressible
> imaginative desires, not God's. Breaking out of their
> fabricated tombs, Poe's restless corpses testify to the
> power of paranoia to galvanize the world into meaning.
> However grotesque and distorted these paranoid monsters
> may be, they seem preferable to the only other
> alternative available in Poe's world, namely, objectless
> ennui, a living death. (47)

With memory's necromancy, both restless corpses and living deaths serve as the haunted and haunting basis for meanings. Because the suspended self remains as strangely mysterious as the external world in Poe, Auerbach's notions of otherness and self-consciousness seem to assure a schematic certainty themselves, but without even evoking the hauntings of memory, Auerbach's restless corpses suggest the doubled ghost effects of meaning. However, I suggest, his polarization into paranoia and ennui mark off excessive limits between which, in Poe's texts, worlds of suggestive possibilities move. Nevertheless, the demand for certain interpretative readings in the face of an unfounded and unsettled context defers to recuperative attempts: thus, cultural and social contracts, psychoanalytic regressions to the womb, searches for linguistic origins, and so on.

Perhaps longing for an assuring objectivity, Auerbach regards this strange confusion of (con)textuality as "a kind of paralyzing subjectivity that makes it impossible to distinguish between self and other, as if all other persons were simply displaced versions of an inescapable 'I'" (26). Critically, Poe might well agree, but insist that depicted paralysis and ennui do not remain the only options. Recalling the reader to an analysis of the dead and lost, "[r]ather than condescending to Poe's blind narrators, or even blaming Poe for impersonating them," Auerbach directs attention to the suspended narrative structure: "we need to explore how the

first person, held in suspension between Poe and the narrated self, manages to construe the narrative" (26). Conflating the absences of the author, the narrator, and the narrated, the reader arranges the architectonic structures that (con)textually reflect the reader's own inheritance of ghostly suspensions.

Thus as examples, these narrative memorials appear textually refined by reflective moments of uncertainty and forgetting and by inconsistencies in architectural and landscape features and enclosures that might conceal precious bodies or the images of precious bodies. Dwelling dreamily on these uncertainties and inconsistencies of retention, how survivors keep the departed, might indicate for the reflective reader a suspension of assurance and a relaxation of the processes of resistance as s/he looks down into the aesthetic inscription of loss. Reflecting on reading the embodied text, through networks of identifications, the reader might also regard the contextual structures of writing as suspended and mournfully lost.

Chapters three and four look at the mournful and doubtful disturbances as the narrators regard them. Admitting problems with memory, each narrative point of view recounts or reads backwards into the fascinating and disturbing events that haunt and perplex each with an unanswered secret or mystery. Mirroring the narrator's resistance or acquiescence to the secret, each narrative tries to make sense of the excessive

dilemmas of the mysterious events. Unsatisfied with his
account of the double deaths of Roderick and Madeline Usher,
the superstition-infected narrator of "The Fall of the House
of Usher" tries to resolve the fascinating decay into death by
appealing to medical notions of madness, but he seems to feel
the inadequacy of such scientific explanations in the face of
the uncertain boundaries of death and its haunting aftermath.
Tracing the woman's emergent corpus from its cryptic vault,
the third chapter considers the men's contrasting tendencies
and involvements, the contextual emergences of ghost meanings,
and the reader's identifications. Focusing on the excessive
violence of the ghostly and suspended remainder, the fourth
chapter compares dilemmas of the intellectual fear of
"Morella" with the emotional hope of "Eleonora." The
oppressed narrator of "Morella" deals with the loss of his
learned wife and beloved daughter. Severely depressed, he
remains by the tale's end obsessively haunted by Morella's
strange image. Revealed through the too perfect identity
between mother and child, the answer to his questions about
that personal identity "<u>which at death is or is not lost
forever</u>" seems gradually and fatefully displaced by some
enkindled demon and/or fiend within that threatens his own
sameness of identity (II 29). The more hopeful narrator of
"Eleonora" tries to accept the mournful loss of his innocent
and artless cousin. Reflected in his written remembrances of
her, his faithful acceptance opens certainty and doubt to the

unsettling effects of a strange and dreamy inheritance and permits him to survive, although abjectly, with an angelic love. Taken as always doubled variants dealing with fatal loss and doubt, these tales seem to provide aesthetic and ethical insights into Poe's narrative understandings of the haunting excesses of the remainder. While structurally marked by peculiarities in handling the so-called proper mourning, these tales suggest a uniquely contemporary promise for attempting to deal with the violent dilemmas of mourning, doubt, uncertainty, and loss.

The notion that Poe banned all morals from his works remains as mistaken as ever. Engaging the intellectual beliefs that presuppose mental conceptions, Poe in "The Poetic Principle" contingently divides "with a sufficient distinction" what he takes as the offices of the three mental realms: the intellect, the taste, and the moral sense (XIV 273). Placing taste in the middle, Poe admits their close association, and he asserts that taste "holds intimate relations with either extreme; but from the Moral Sense is separated by so faint a difference that Aristotle has not hesitated to place some of its operations among the virtues themselves" (XIV 272-73). Thus for Poe, only a faint difference separates tastes from morals. While some who regard Poe as a strict advocate of art for art's sake would like to banish his works completely from the ethical stage, his reluctance to go proves worrisome indeed. Redistributing

morals contextually and intuitively reflects an important part of Poe's epistemological project.

Like the epic mania, Poe opposed "the heresy of <u>the Didactic</u>," the explicitly dogmatic teaching of truth and morals in art works (XIV 271). He could not finally separate truth or morals from art. He states the problem:

> It has been assumed, tacitly and avowedly, directly and indirectly, that the ultimate object of all Poetry is Truth. Every poem, it is said, should inculcate a moral; and by this moral is the poetical merit of the work to be adjudged. (XIV 271)

Adjudicating poetry strictly in ideological terms of truth or morals misses the artistry of the work in favor of its propagandistic or persuasive teaching. The unattainability of any ultimate endeavor toward an ideal of taste or beauty forces the poem to draw on different notions of truth and morals. Stressing the dignity and nobility of the poem itself and including himself as an American who patronizes and develops "this happy idea," Poe admits that the soul's sense of morality enters into poetic inscription:

> We have taken it into our head that to write a poem simply for the poem's sake, and to acknowledge such to have been our design, would be to confess ourselves radically wanting in the true Poetic dignity and force:-- but the simple fact is, that, would we but permit ourselves to look into our own souls, we should immediately there discover that under the sun there neither exists or <u>can</u> exist any work more thoroughly dignified--more supremely noble than this very poem--this poem <u>per se</u>--this poem which is a poem and nothing more-- this poem written solely for the poem's sake. (XIV 271- 72)

Supported by the sole-soul pun, the per se nothingness of the poem's imaginative contexts suspended through layers of

haunting inheritances helps identify for its reflective reader the force of his or her own dignity and nobility. Aesthetic elements also function ethically. Not radically wanting in moral insight, such a reflective poem constrains the reader to take ethical responsibility for his/her own reading.

My thesis asserts that the loss of idealized objects, such as an ideal or a loved one through the death, brings incoherent and inconsistent effects that register on the contextual articulations of sensations, feelings, thoughts, and inspirations. Drawing on the shared legacies of faithful losses and crypts, collusive readers try within the context of unfounded memory to preserve their phantasmically strange identifications. Ultimately, these spectral losses render constancy and certainty strangely meaningless, but disturbed and disturbing embodiments and reflections remain to engage various values and forces. Circulating around death, mourning and skepticism in Poe's texts offer structured insights into the acceptance of loss or the resistance to loss that can ease the inevitable disappropriations. Loss remains finally unavoidable, but as many death studies indicate, various treatments of this loss can make a contextual difference. In different directions a similar pattern emerges for mourning and the loss of ideals. In terms of mourning, these effects appear through the tensions between introjective processes and incorporative fantasies, in the phantom and haunting effects of the resulting encryption, and by the consequent anasemic

redistribution. In terms of the ruins of concepts and rational ideas, these effects appear through the tensions between skeptical inquiry and ideal propositions, in unsettling effects of suspending judgments and values, and by the intuitive and aesthetic possibilities of contextual redistributions. Memorials to a haunting suspension, Poe's texts operate reflectively with and within these tensions, effects, and redistributions.

I recognize the differences between the suspended judgment of skepticism and the encrypted object of mourning, yet the similarities of dealing with loss and absence in various contexts, especially those of rational argument or trusting rapport, strike me as suggesting a therapeutic ethics calling for a more careful and concerned approach to different material embodiments. Suggested by Poe's pantheistic emphasis on close material observation and his belief in the moral powers of natural philosophy, his ethic of embodied effect questions the values and forces that would inflict torment in endeavoring to concentrate on the fantasy of a pure closure. Additionally, a shared identification with traumas and the missing fundamentally opens strangely haunted questions about the status of identity and what we confidently think of as ourselves and those different from us by reconsidering the certainty of what we take as the "given" distinctions between the factual and the fictional.

This loss of certainty, an assumed consistency or coherence already in question, operates in tandem with mourning. Just as doubt does not construct a positive, rational argument, so too interminable mourning does not arrive at a complete end. Opening wounds of distrust, betrayal, and abandonment, these losses of constancy torment the collaborative reader with seemingly endless possibilities of unfaithfulnesses, infidelities, and disloyalties. Marking and marked by the duplicity of the double and the con of confidence, conviction, and conveyance, a convincing duplication engages Poe's tales and his criticism and cosmology with a difference. Shaking any ultimate basis for confidence, the contextual endeavors to come to terms with this unsettling cryptic death or suspended loss remain disturbingly difficult, perhaps impossible. Violence and perplexity await those who might appear to threaten the cohesive certainties of those who with a forcefully imagined purity resist the acceptance of loss.

These apparently disappropriating processes seem to imply a loss even of commonly accepted notions of loss, almost as if one never had what they dreamed or imagined that they had. With this ultimately unfounded cosmology, even the traditionally accepted functions of memory get thrown into question. Expect resistance; even the persistent attempt to approach or engage this assuring absence of an absence reflects a strange and haunting resistance. When regarded

from the doubled points of view of skepticism and mourning and considered as enveloping these dynamics and enveloped by these dynamics, Poe's texts can receive a finer, more resolved, appreciation from readers.

Notes

1. The notion of effect relates to something produced by a cause or agent, a result, even if the cause and effect only appear related. Extending to fancy and feigning, the notion of affect relates to feelings and emotions, even though it may also mean to produce an effect on. Thus while the senses of the words commingle, affect suggests emotion and feeling, and effect suggests the issue of effective force. In Eureka Poe contrasts the human and divine constructions of adaptation:

> in human constructions a particular cause has a particular effect; a particular intention brings to pass a particular object; but this is all; we see no reciprocity. The effect does not re-act upon the cause; the intention does not change relations with the object. In Divine constructions the object is either design or object as we choose to regard it--and we may take at any time a cause for an effect, or the converse--so that we can never absolutely decide which is which. (XVI 291-2)

For humans the ultimate determination of cause and effect remains undecidable. The ingenuity of writers strives to approach this pleasing reciprocity of adaptation by "so arranging the incidents that we shall not be able to determine, of any one of them, whether it depends from any one or upholds it" (XVI 292). Such plot perfection seems "really, or practically, unattainable" (XVI 292). This indeterminacy of dependence and independence for human constructions suspends any proper distinction between cause and effect or affect.

2. The range of acceptance of the association of sleep and death spans across idealism and skepticism. As suggested by William M. Forrest in his Biblical Allusions in Poe (61), this commonly held Christian notion finds expression in a lament by Job:

> "Why did I not die at birth, come forth from the womb and expire? Why did the knees receive me? Or why the breasts, that I should suck? For then I should have lain down and been quiet; I should have slept; then I should

have been at rest, with the kings and counselors of the earth who rebuilt ruins for themselves, or with princes who had gold, who filled their houses with silver." (The Oxford Annotated Bible Job 3: 11-15 615)

As John S. Hardt indicates in his "Doubts in the American Gardens: Three Cases of Paradisal Skepticism" that looks at "the lack of any standard by which to test one's perceptions, the recurring confusion between dream and reality, the frequent errors of rationalism, and the large part of human experience which can only be called 'irrational'" in "The Fall of the House of Usher" (258), even for those surviving abortion and abandonment, this lamentable difficulty does not vanish because of the "retreat from the paradisal ideal with a recognition of limits in human knowledge" (249). See the indented citation in endnote five for David Hume's skeptical perception of death, sleep, and the nonexistence of personal identity.

3. In addition to death and dream reveries, hypnosis, or sleep-waking as Poe terms it, perhaps alluding to the connection between imaginative fancies and hypnogogic reveries, also fascinated him as an approach to trying to conceptualize the impossible. Appearing as the main focus in "Mesmeric Revelation" and "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," the latter tale denounced in a letter to Arch Ramsay as a hoax, the riveting spiritual and material possibilities of hypnosis get explored by Poe. In the introduction to "Mesmeric Revelation" after denouncing those who doubt the facts of mesmerism, despite its rationale, as "mere doubters by profession--an unprofitable and disreputable tribe," the mesmerist claims:

> There can be no more absolute waste of time than the attempt to prove, at the present day, that man, by mere exercise of will, can so impress his fellow, as to cast him into an abnormal condition, of which the phenomena resemble very closely those of death, or at least resemble them more nearly than they do the phenomena of any other normal condition within our cognizance; that, while in this state, the person so impressed employs only with effort, and then feebly, the external organs of sense, yet perceives, with keenly refined perception, and through channels supposedly unknown, matters beyond the scope of the physical organs; that moreover, his intellectual faculties are wonderfully exalted and invigorated; that his sympathies with the person so impressing him are profound; and finally, that his susceptibility to the impression increases with its frequency, while, in the same proportion, the peculiar phenomena elicited are more extended and more pronounced. (V 241)

While Poe's position to mesmerism seems undecidable, the possibility remains that as grief can stimulate the imagination and hypnogogic reveries can produce fancies, so too hypnotic rapport might serve as the fascination that relates fancy to imagination, joins common sense to the visionary, brings the enabler to the addict, and attracts the lover to the beloved.

4.   For all my readings in Poe's biographies Arthur Hobson Quinn's Edgar Allan Poe: A Critical Biography remains the most generally informative and, if tediously detailed reading in places, the best introduction. The death dates given in his biography allow the computation of Poe's age when those around him disappeared or died. According to Quinn, David Poe, Jr., simply vanishes when Poe was 21 months old. Ostrom's letters, however, have Poe asserting that his mother and father died within a few weeks of one another. No record of his father's death date or any trace of him following his departure has surfaced as of yet.

Kenneth Silverman's biography, Edgar A. Poe: Mournful and Never-ending Remembrance, considers Poe's "intent imaginings about death" (77). While his view of mourning might benefit from more structurally rigorous studies on the psychological effects of trauma, loss, and death, Silverman's focus on memory and contradictory ambivalences begins a much needed appreciation of the nuances of Poe's mournings:

> Edgar's underlying denial of death, perhaps also helps to explain his easy remolding and evasion of lesser truths, and it gives particular poignancy to his often stated preference for the far-off realms of dream and imagination over reality. His simultaneous belief and unbelief, finally, produces not only other beings and landscapes at once living and dead, but such other derivatives as images of things at once conscious and unconscious, near and far, present and absent, lost and inalienable, evoking opposed feelings of grief and joy, despair and hope, loss and return, separation and union-- expressions of what he himself called his "innate love of contradiction." (77)

5.   As with most things, a controversy surrounds the possibility or impossibility of experiencing death. Undoubtably, one can sense, perceive, and experience dying or an approach to death. Some of these sensations can become articulated intelligibly to most users of a language although, again, some question remains about how well the experience of pain conveys to those not in similar pain (see Elaine Scarry's The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World).

Also undoubtably, one can perceive the effects of death on another, but here the ambiguity of the "of" comes into

play. One can sense the effects of another's death, but not the experience of death that another does or does not perceive or conceive at the moment of the final approach toward death. In short, to say that one experiences the death of another does not claim one has had that experience of death, if such an experience even seems attainable. Excepting certain mythic cases, such as Inanna or Lazarus, none who have finally experienced death have come back to articulate their sensations or lack of sensations.

In "'My Death'" in <u>The Encyclopedia of Philosophy</u>, Paul Edwards questions the impossibility of imagining or conceiving one's own death. He juxtaposes Freud's claim in "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death," "'Our own death is unimaginable'" (416) because we cannot eliminate ourselves as contextual spectators when we think of our own deaths, with that of Bertrand Russell from "What I Believe," "'When I die, I shall rot and nothing of my ego will survive'" (416). Edwards rightly questions the double sense in which Freud seems to use the notion of death, for if we cannot imagine our own deaths, then in a similar sense we should remain unable to imagine the death of another. To think, imagine, or conceive of the spectacle of the death of another or of ourselves does seem possible if we imagine ourselves as objects and note that even as observers we remain absent from the scene. Nevertheless, we must still imagine ourselves when dead as observed by some observer in order to erase ourselves from the scene. Except as a fantasy, it seems impossible to sense or experience death as perceived at its final moment by either another or ourselves. Russell's view has many similarities to that put forth by David Hume in his chapter "Of Personal Identity" for his <u>The Treatise of Human Nature</u> when he writes:

> I never can catch <u>myself</u> at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception. When my perceptions are remov'd for any time, as by sound sleep; so long am I sensible of <u>myself</u>, and may truly be said not to exist. And were all my perceptions remov'd by death, and could I neither think, nor feel, nor see, nor love, nor hate after the dissolution of my body, I shou'd be entirely annihilated, nor do I conceive what is farther required to make me a perfect non-entity. If any one upon serious and unprejudic'd reflection, thinks he has a different notion of <u>himself</u>, I must confess I can reason no longer with him. All I can allow him is, that he may be in the right as well as I. (84)

While Russell relies somewhat objectively on a continuous sense of the term ego past his own death for a sense of identity and at the same time erases that sense of the term ego, Hume claims that "As memory alone acquaints us with the continuance and extent of this succession of perceptions, 'tis

to be consider'd, upon that account chiefly, as the source of personal identity" (90). An observer who excludes himself from the scene can imagine or conceive Russell's failure of the ego to survive and Hume's removal of perceptions that attends the rotting or dissolution of the body at death, but at the same time the observer, retains some traces of the continuous sense of the word and/or of the memory under erasure in order to make the claim articulable. Poe might well claim that the articulation marks the cessation or interruption of the implications of the thought of one's own death. The thought of one's own death remains impossible for him. In a letter to Arch Ramsay Poe denounces the in articulo mortis, "'I am dead'" (VI 163), of his character, M. Valdemar: "Hoax is precisely the word suited to M. Valdemar's case. . . . Some few persona believe it--but I do not--and don't you" (Ostrom 2 337). The scene of death imagined or conceived remains unsensed or unexperienced as the dead would or might experience it. Marked by a certain uncertainty, this sensing of death seems impossible because of the deceased absence of the perceiving observer. For an observer there appears in language nothing problematic about conceiving or imagining a scene that excludes the conceiver or imaginer. However, this possibility assumes the continuity of some sense of words after the death of the one who utters them. Such an absence seems required in order for the reference of language to function. If one can possibly think about the death of another, its certain uncertainty, then in an approximately similar sense one can think about the death of oneself, but no mere mortal can sense or conceptualize the radical difference of death and finally articulate that alterity. Paradoxically, the seeming absence of death makes possible the transcendental effects of articulation and ruptures the possibilities of ultimately articulating transcendental values.

6. In Poe, Death, and the Life of Writing, Kennedy observes that "Poe's representation of the tomb as an object of both repression and fixation curiously anticipates the theory of 'cryptonomy' elaborated by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok" and interests as "figuring the contradictions of bereavement" (72).

7. Of all Poe scholars, G. R. Thompson has provided the best view of Poe's mournful skepticism in general. I remain indebted to his suggestive leads. Focusing on the ironic transcendence of the Romantic German ironists, Thompson fails to appreciate how rarely Poe's writings mention transcendence and how Poe tends to employ parody and hoax, rather than irony. The irony Poe does use remains tinted with a dark bitterness. Nevertheless, acknowledging the importance of skepticism and melancholia in Poe's work, Thompson's ground-breaking views have proven invaluable for my work, much of which takes its lead from his observations. Berating scholars

for not showing the importance of skepticism in Poe's works, in "Unity, Death, and Nothingness--Poe's 'Romantic Skepticism'" Thompson stresses <u>Eureka</u>'s equation of material nothingness with the spiritual deity: "These remarks have never been emphasized by critics of Poe's thought, with the result that the implicit melancholy skepticism of the essay has never been seriously considered" (298). However, unlike Thompson, I claim that instead of joining the Romantic aesthetic of the artist as God, Poe recognized the limits of the artist and the incomprehensibility of God in the face of inevitable loss. In <u>Poe's Fiction: Romantic Irony in the Gothic Tales</u>, Thompson recognizes that Poe's oscillating position presents an "ambivalent skepticism, neither quite theistic nor quite atheistic" (191) and identifies the tensions in Poe's writings: "In Poe's tales, we feel a skeptical tension between disorder and hope, madness and rationality, uncertainty and knowledge, despair and hope. It is this that animates all of Poe's writings" (194). My divergence from Thompson does not deny his main point, that the Romantic German ironists, particularly Schelling, also influenced by skepticism, had an important impact on Poe's writing. Undoubtably and interestingly, they did. Again as a ground-breaking endeavor, Thompson's work awaits further studies on German skepticism and such contributions as Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy's <u>The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism</u>. Counterbalanced by a persistently skeptical critique, Poe's guesses and intuitive attempts to derive from nebulous matter those geometrical, mathematical, and scientific principles that might serve to convince readers by analogy of a moral spirit find an assurance in the inevitability of death and its attendant losses. This unsettling assurance does not place Poe's texts smugly in the Romantic genre of negative possibility. Strangely unsettling, Poe's suggestive negativity functions in a less certain context. Even before feeling and thinking emerge as appropriative processes, with certainty loss assures that mourning shall surround and permeate everything with its nothingness and guarantees the abortion of conception.

CHAPTER 1
MOURNING

[B]eing young and dipt in folly
I fell in love with melancholy,
And used to throw my earthly rest
And quiet all away in jest--
I could not love except where Death
Was mingling his with Beauty's breath--
Or Hymen, Time, and Destiny
Were stalking between her and me.
                    --Edgar Allan Poe, "Romance"

I would comfort you--soothe you--tranquillize you.
My love--my faith--should instil into your bosom a
præternatural calm. You would rest from care--from
all worldly agitation. You would get better, and
finally well. And if <u>not</u>, Helen,--if not--if you
<u>died</u>--then at least would I clasp your dear hand in
death, and willingly--<u>oh, joyfully--joyfully--
joyfully</u>--go down <u>with</u> you into the night of the
Grave.
                    --Edgar Allan Poe, a letter to Sarah Whitman

With   the   impossibility   of   attaining   an   ultimate

conception or ideal, some implications of loss in relation to

psychoanalytic affects and effects call for attention.   In

order to help situate these emotions in the tales, the

relevant theoretical backgrounds for mournings as responses to

loss need a general review.

Although afflicted with cultural and gender bias, to

date, Freud's heroic efforts to resolve the apparent

differences of human personalities remain among the most

outstanding.   Freud's theory of mourning as an oral reaction

to the loss of any trusted or idealized object and Karl
Abraham's and Melanie Klein's subsequent treatments of the
topic contribute particular emphases for understanding loss
and mourning and suggest productive ways of reading Poe's
texts.   Stemming from Freud's insights, the approaches to
mourning developed by John Bowlby, Vamik Volkan, and Jacques
Lacan remain as productive, if as hampered in different ways
by their master's scientific positivism. Developed from the
classical psychoanalytic notions of incorporation and
introjection, Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok's post-
phenomenological theories of mourning, specifically encryption
and its ghost effects on language, anasemia, add a better
structural resolution to the dynamics of loss reflected in
Poe's texts and prepare for the application of the ghost
effects found in the tales. Not the only or, indeed, the best
way to approach Poe's writings, the tactical application of
these psychoanalytic notions of oral dependency yields the
most detailed structural framework for theoretically following
and understanding the affective possibilities of mourning in
Poe's texts.   Under a close reading, Poe's tales could
contribute to an improved psychoanalytic approach to mourning,
an improvement based on his fideistic skepticism.

    Statements from Poe's letters about the deaths of his
parents and wife indicate his memories of the effects of his
losses and help situate his views in relation to the theories
of psychoanalysis. Assessing Marie Bonaparte's view of Poe's

attachments to the dead and Nicolas Abraham's reading of Poe's "The Raven," I accept their notions of an oral disturbance leading to necrophilia, but question the genuine assurances of their hypotheses about the unconscious and memory, inherited from Freud. At once positive and nebulous, Freud's theoretically assumed constancy of memory and the unconscious helps situate the psychoanalytic resistances to loss and mourning. Poe's questioning of the foggy incomprehensibilities and discontinuities of the subject's self-cognizance contrasts with many analysts' apparently positivistic idealizations of the subject's identity. These views concerning mourning, loss, and negation allow my analysis to develop a collaboration of notions from psychoanalysis and skepticism in order to explicate better the structure of Poe's textual treatment of emotional and intellectual loss.

Mourning in Freud, Abraham, and Klein

In "Mourning and Melancholia," Freud observes that "[m]ourning is regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one" (XIV 243). Thus, as Freud views it, mourning does not refer just to the loss of an idealized person, but to the loss of any abstract idealization. This reaction, the economic "work" of mourning, involves "reality" testing to confirm that the ideal loved one who seemed so constant no

longer survives, a slow and painful withdrawing through a process termed hypercathexis of all the libidinal attachments including memories and hopes bound to the object, and, at last, a freeing and uninhibiting of the ego. The withdrawal of all attachments, including memories, fears, and hopes, of deeply lost loves and ideals seems like an interminable task that calls for the ego to abandon what it takes as the most precious parts of itself. The expenditure of energy "draws attention to the fact that we do not even know the economic means by which mourning carries out its task" (255) but usually appears to get accomplished within a year or so. Even Freud seems perplexed as to precisely how this task achieves completion. In melancholia the libido regresses onto the ego and, through a narcissistic identification between the ego and the lost object, remains there. The melancholic refuses to give up the precious loss. The processes of mourning and melancholia bear resemblances: "the ego, confronted as it were with the question whether it shall share this fate, is persuaded by the sum of the narcissistic satisfactions it derives from being alive to sever its attachment to the object that has been abolished" (255). The mourner gives up the loss and resumes the quest for narcissistic satisfactions. Thus, whether to sever identifications or remain identified with the absent object of beloved constancy determines the difference between mourning and melancholia and characterizes the different narcissisms of the subjects. In melancholia, the

conflict in the ego, split between the object-identified ego and the ego's critical ability, substitutes for mourning's struggles around the lost object. Holding on to the memories of the lost ideal as if enduring, the depressed melancholic begins to oscillate between the hope of their survival and the fear of their disappearance. According to Freud, in melancholia the oral identification regresses toward cannibalism. The disturbance of trust in the constancy of the ideal object seems to trigger a problematic orality that marks incorporative moments of eating and attitudes toward food and drink in Poe's texts. Also, under the influence of ambivalence toward the object, the melancholic's erotic cathexis joins through the ego's criticism to sadism, moral dissatisfaction, and concerns about inferiority and poverty. This conjunction counterbalances the idealized dependence. Blame or guilt concerning the loss might account for Poe's peculiar relations to appropriate and inappropriate cultural values and behaviors. While any projective classification of Poe as a melancholic or a mourner must remain deferred, perhaps indefinitely because of his complex relations to absences of objects, both Karl Abraham and Melanie Klein provide some additional insights in their elaborations on Freud's theories.

Karl Abraham suggests that object love begins in the encounters around control between the retentive anal-sadistic stages of development and derives from earlier oral stages.

In mourning and loss, the griever reacts to the anal loss of property by creating in memory a temporary oral introjection of the loved one. Melancholia becomes an archaic form of mourning in which severe ambivalences toward the object result in radical libidinal disturbances. The melancholic holds tenaciously on to the "temporary" oral introjection. These complications of dependence and independence include oral difficulties with passive sucking and the aggressive use of teeth as well as anal problems with the control of property and sadistic destruction. In mourning, Abraham claims, "[w]hen the libidinal cathexis has been withdrawn from the object, it is directed, as we know, to the ego, while at the same time the object is introjected into the ego" (454). Presumably, if this temporary oral introjection becomes lodged as an image through its persistent memory, the inclusion might appear as an incorporation. Specific factors in melancholia include (1) a constitutional disposition, (2) a special oral fixation, (3) a severe injury to infantile narcissism due to successive disappointments in love, (4) the first setback in love occurring before the oedipal wishes, and (5) repetitions of the primary disappointments in later life.

Abraham notes that while the introjected can include both the mother and the father, for the melancholic boy, these disappointments usually center around the mother who becomes associated with castration. The ego's introjected love object becomes both a foundation for the subject's ego ideal or model

and the target of a merciless criticism directed at self-reproach. The normative role of this notion of castration surfaces when disappointment or the threat of loss seems to threaten the subject's identity rather than appearing to prepare the ego for the inevitability of subsequent losses. At any rate, Abraham's ideas help situate the oral economy and the various deaths of women and men in Poe's stories. The ego ideal might help explain Poe's choice to pursue an artistic career like his mother and father, rather than Mr. Allan's, his almost guardian's, choice of law for him. Poe's merciless self-criticism, in part, might help account for his controlling insistence on close readings of works before judging them and his occasional depreciation of his own works before those he perceived as authorities.

Melanie Klein writes that a mourner

> not only takes into himself (reincorporates) the person whom he has just lost, but also reinstates his internalized good objects (ultimately his loved parents), who became part of his inner world from the earliest stages. . . . These too are felt to have gone under, to be destroyed, whenever the loss of a loved person is experienced. (353)

This loss of mourning reactivates what Klein terms the infantile depressive position, those feelings and "reality" testings that surround weaning (i.e., mourning the breast). According to her, the child incorporates doubles (after Otto Rank's notion) of the parents and "feels them to be live people inside . . . in the concrete way in which deep unconscious phantasies are experienced" (345). Memory seems

to function within a reflective economy of such phantasmic doublings. The infantile depressive position, the source of mania and melancholia, includes feelings of persecution and of sorrow and their respective resistant defenses of defiantly destroying the persecutors violently or cunningly and of wistful pining or longing. The idealized mother guards against a dead or retaliating mother and against all bad objects. She or rather her doubled incorporation represents security and even life itself. Insecurities impede the normative resolution of the infantile depressive position and mourning. Depressive anxiety drives the ego to omnipotent and violent phantasies to master the bad objects created by the splitting of imagoes that results from ambivalence. Idealization and denial operate as manic counterfunctions, but the manic triumph stemming from the subject's omnipotence and contempt interferes with inner security and efforts at mourning. The guilt from the triumphant phantasies over parents can cripple later therapeutic endeavors because success and humiliation become connected through association. The manic's large scale thinking defends against thoughts of the fears of losing the still mourned mother.

According to Klein, to accept or work through mourning requires decreased ambivalence, increased trust, hope, and greater inner security. As tears excrete a subject's bad feelings and objects and when grief and despair seem greatest and love wells up in a subject for the lost object, then the

mourner feels that he can preserve the lost love within and that life can go on. At this point, Klein assures that suffering can become creative and productive. Klein's theories concerning the passionate phantasies of mania might help account for both the cunning, violent triumphs and the contemptuous, insecure denials in many of Poe's tales. Regardless of the difficulties of separating or evaluating social victories from failures, his characters do reflect an ambivalence between the humiliation of defeat and the triumph of success. Still, the possibility of accepting the loss of love and getting on with survival also appears in "Eleonora." Klein's suggested use of mourning for creativity and productivity strikingly parallels Poe's suggested use of grief's fantasies to stimulate dispassionate poetic imagination as set forth in his review of Amelia Welby.

These analysts helped develop the structural distinctions between incorporative and introjective tendencies that help account for some oral tensions found generally in Poe's texts and images, and particularly in striking scenes with drink, food, cannibalism, and necrophagy. Other analytic approaches could also help resolve some of Poe's textual dynamics. John Bowlby's studies on separation anxieties and their defenses elaborate the nosological and clinical consequences of early childhood loss and trauma. Recalling Freud's <u>fort-da</u> game and extending Winnecott's transitional object, Vamik Volkan's linking objects and phenomena mediating loss and the

bereaved's responses appear worthy of more consideration than they have received. Jacques Lacan and two of his students, Julia Kristeva and Slavoj Žižek, develop notions of the gap of the real, <u>das Ding</u>, that make symptomatic the imaginary and symbolic orders so that every interpretation and interpellation fails (see Lacan's readings on <u>Hamlet</u>). Although in some passages both Freud and Lacan seem aware of their dependencies on the constructs of language, in more or less subtle ways, psychoanalysis iterates and reifies the scientific positivism and ideal subjectivity basic to its founding works. Through their critical appreciations of language and mourning, Abraham and Torok begin to move away from these bases in ways that help resolve Poe's concerns.

<u>Abraham and Torok's Crypts</u>

These psychoanalytic studies of oral dependencies and the adaptations for dealing with traumatic losses lay out the influences and contexts that serve as foundations for the theories of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok. Incorporation plays a critical role in these theories as does the assumed object constancy of the idealized object.

Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok approach loss and mourning with a more open acceptance of their uncertainties. While remaining within the Freudian tradition, the psychoanalysts consider identity both as a character's personal subjectivity and as self-reflexivity within narrative

language. In "Maladie du deuil" Abraham and Torok note about mourning:

> <u>It is not, as one might think, an affliction caused by the objective loss itself, but the feeling of having been invaded by desire, of having been surprised by an excess [débordement] of the libido, at the least suitable moment, when it is fitting to be distressed and to abandon oneself to despair</u>. (My translation 232)

If, as the psychoanalysts claim in "Introjection--Incorporation: <u>mourning</u> or <u>melancholia</u>," this excessively inappropriate desire to articulate the unspeakable becomes "<u>a matter of the sudden loss of a narcissistically indispensable object, while at the same time that loss is of such a nature as to prohibit communication</u>" (7), then this invasion of desire may incorporatively block the process of introjection.

Introjection and incorporation represent divergent strategies of oral development for dealing with loss and/or death. Introjection serves as a basis for the transition "from the breast-filled mouth to word-filled mouth" (5). In the mouth, words receive the displaced gratification and frustrations associated with the nurturing breast. Recalling the <u>fort da</u> or bobbin game in which words come to stand in for the mother's body from Freud's <u>Beyond the Pleasure Principle</u>, a passage from "Introjection-Incorporation" explains the operation of introjection:

> Learning to fill the void of the mouth with words constitutes an early paradigm of introjection. Clearly this cannot occur without the constant presence [<u>l'assistance constante</u>] of a mother who herself possesses language. Her constancy--like that of Descartes' God--is the necessary guarantee of the meaning of words. When that guarantee is assured, and only then,

> words can replace the mother's presence [<u>la présence maternelle</u>] and give rise to new introjections. First the empty mouth, then the absence of objects become words, and finally experiences with words themselves are converted [<u>se convertissent</u>] into other words. Thus the original oral void will have found a remedy for all its wants through their conversion in linguistic intercourse [<u>rapport de langage</u>] with the speaking community. To introject a wish, a grief, or a situation is to dispose of it through language in a communion of empty mouths. Thus food absorption, in the literal sense, becomes introjection in the figurative sense. To achieve [<u>opérer</u>] this transition [<u>passage</u>], presence [<u>la présence</u>] of the object must be superseded by auto-apprehension, of its absence [<u>absence</u>]. Language, which makes up for [<u>supplée</u>] that absence by <u>representing</u> [figurant] presence, can be <u>understood</u> only within the community of empty mouths. (6)

If the mother's constancy guarantees the meanings of words, then her continued loss calls those meanings into question, yet the child can sense or apprehend the assuming sameness of her constancy only through the differences of her goings and comings, her "absence and presence." The communion or collusion of empty mouths displaces a constancy of the seeming omnipotent nourisher with a constancy of language. With introjection's successful substitutions, the caretaker's constancy gradually gets diffused into the seemingly circular conversions of one word into different words. In this version of developmental psycholinguistics, attitudes of oral dependence and independence get reflected in the assumed and acquired structures of language. Converting the literal into the figurative, the care of the language skilled provider, usually the mother, guarantees that the lack expressed in a child's hunger, desire, and/or loss will find appeasement or

more or less fulfillment through the child's articulations in words.

Proper language addressed to the constant attendant seems magically rewarding. Initially provided seemingly gratis by the caretaker, eating and the appropriate satisfactions of hunger call for increasingly sophisticated language skills and assertions of desires on the child's part in order to maintain a differentiated power and control over the articulation of needs and wants and over the satisfactions delivered through language. Balking, crying, and vomiting exemplify resistances to the acceptance of such development. With the gradual loss of the mothering body during weaning, language supplements figuratively the characteristics of her missing body and, according to the analysts, even presupposes its loss. Such unsettling separations vary greatly in abruptness and trauma. The critically important dynamics of alimentary absorption and nourishment, along with the body's desire for satisfaction, motivate or drive the acquisition of sound discrimination and speaking skills. The tensions and relaxations of the child's articulating mouth, lips, teeth, and tongue as acknowledged by the caretaker seem to assure the differentiations of the inside and outside across the surfaces of body and language.

The sudden absence of the guarantor, an ego-ideal for the developing child, during this process of acquisition profoundly disrupts a sense of constancy, strikes a blow at the development of narcissistic self, and prevents the ability

to communicate the utter devastation of the loss. In short, this loss reveals the layers of assumptions or hypotheses in proper psychic development at this oral stage. The disappearance of the expected assurance of care disrupts the persistent continuity of important objects and services: food, diaper care, the body and patterns of the nourisher, security, and words. At least in part, the trust and control of the developing child groan under the trauma. Thus, the "inability to introject the loss" (8) goes so far as to block the child's expression in language of the rejection or denial of the horrific loss. This inability to betray the grief to anyone establishes the conditions needed for cherishing both the memories and associative relays of connections with the processes of loss and the fantasy of incorporation:

> all the words he [the child] may not say, and all the tears he may not shed will be swallowed, along with the trauma, the cause of his loss. Swallowed and preserved. Grief that cannot be expressed builds a secret vault within the subject. In this crypt reposes--alive, reconstituted from the memories of words, images, and feelings--the objective counterpart of the loss, as a complete person with his own topography, as well as the traumatic incidents--real or imagined--that had made introjection impossible. In this way a whole unconscious fantasy world is created, where a separate and secret life is led. Yet it happens that with libidinal activity "in the middle of the night," the phantom of the crypt may come to haunt the keeper of the graveyard, making strange and incomprehensible signs to him, forcing him to perform unwonted acts, arousing unexpected feelings in him. (8)

Preserving the words, images, and feelings of the lost caretaker and containing the traumatic events, the memorial memories reconstitute a topological fantasy of "a complete

person" separated from the awareness of the ego and actually included by a "secret vault within the subject." Emitted from the oral incorporation, ghost effects of the phantom of the crypt exert a significant structural influence, a haunting, on the person that seems to lodge the cherished subject within: "From their imaginary crypt--where they were thought to have been devitalized, anesthetized, deprived of meaning, and put into hibernation through fantasy--those unspeakable words do not cease to exert their insidious effect" (11). Neither simply literal nor figurative, these words operate on language with an anasemic distribution.

For Edgar Allan Poe, these oral, linguistic effects of the incorporation of the disappearance of his mother, Elizabeth Arnold Poe, might account in part for the persistent similarity of the labial and nasal sounds in the names of his heroines as well as his retention of his "protector's" middle name so that his initials matched those of his mother, E. A. P. An identity registers in their signature effects. Requiring additional study, Poe's identifications with his mother and his mother's name seem quite remarkable. At any rate, from the memory of the lost one within and its "unutterable words and phrases, linked to highly narcissistic and libidinal memories" (10), a separate unconscious develops. The encryption within the self haunts their shared unconsciousness. Strange and uncanny effects appear. The expressions of this enclave do not simply manifest the return

of the repressed because the repression no longer stems from a single ego, but from a doubled ego.

Each incorporated crypt has its own unconfessed mourning resulting from the memory of an experience tainted with shame. An architectonic habitation, this crypt requires that the memory of the object remain idealized and, yet, protected from the shame that the shared traumatic experience attaches to the object:

> For the subject to build one [a crypt], the shameful secret must have been the deed of an object, playing the role of ego ideal. It is therefore a matter of keeping its secret, of hiding its shame.
> If the object is not mourned--as is customary with figures of speech, it is for the very good reason that if metaphors that are used to cause shame were evoked in mourning, they would be invalidated (precisely as metaphors) by the loss of the ideal that is their guarantor. The solution of the cryptophoric subject will be to nullify the effect of shame by--covertly or overtly--taking the meaning of the words of the stigma literally. "To introject" again becomes "to put in the mouth," "to swallow," "to eat"; the reviled object will in turn be "fecalized," as it were, transformed into true excrement. The refusal to introject the loss of the ideal will be expressed by double defiance: by challenging the reviler and, epitomizing the fantasy and its innumerable variations of eating, by boasting of having eaten excrement [coprophagy]--by slovenliness, filth, obscenity, etc. (9-10)

According to the analysts, the protection of this secret guilt creates a challenging impropriety and a rhetorical figure that actively undercut figuration. Under the pressure of the trauma, the subject tries to return to the assurances of the more literal levels of language. The analysts believe that the consequent antimetaphor, which finds its paradigm, not in necrophagy, but in coprophagy, "is not simply a matter of

going back to the literal sense of the words but of using them in such a way—in speech or in action—that their 'figurativeness' is thereby destroyed" (10).

Because he distrusted allegorical effects, Poe's language does appear curiously devoid of metaphorical usages, and his creative metonymies often function under the influence of a memory of loss. Requiring introjection, the fantasy of incorporation thus seems to destroy the possibility of metaphor and introjection, the conversion of the empty mouth into words, but as the therapists note, "introjection constitutes the nostalgic evocation of every incorporation" (7). Thus tending toward an abject conflation, a structural asymmetry develops with significant implications. The fantasy of incorporation always presupposes an introjective process, whereas for the analysts, introjection does not depend upon incorporation. While the idealized meanings of incorporation require the articulating processes of introjection with its metaphorical "communion of empty mouths," the challenging and boastful meanings of incorporation resist and depend upon an acceptance of the losses that find their organization around the buccal and anal orifices.

The allocation of shame or guilt between the encrypted object and the subject operates rather complexly. As the "exchanging of one's own identity for a phantasmic identification with the 'life'—beyond the grave—of an object lost as the result of some metapsychological traumatism" ("A

Poetics of Psychoanalysis: 'The Lost Object--Me'" 5),
endocryptic identification functions as a mechanism that hides
the self from the crypt or, as the analysts, quoting Freud,
claim, conceals "'the Ego under the guise of the object'" (5).
However, to complete this identification, the opposite, in
which "the 'object' in turn, carries the ego as its mask" (5),
also envelops the connection between the identities. Thus,
the apparent topological identity of the encrypted object both
envelops and becomes enveloped by the identity of the subject.
Many of Poe's stories question the authenticity of identity
based on the contextual difficulties of assigning a priority
to either the object or the ego. Based on inherited memories,
identity proper both contains and becomes contained by a
phantasmic identification with life-beyond-death. Through
memory, this contextual envelope allows an identification with
the dead and absent. This cryptofantasy, as the therapists
note, "concerns not so much an object which no longer exists,
but . . . the 'mourning' that this 'object' allegedly carries
out as a result of losing the subject; the subject,
consequently, now appears to be painfully missed by the
'object'" (5). This covert and imaginary identification,
unable to speak its aim or even its name, remains unutterable
or impossible to articulate, but it does produce anasemic
effects through the subject's articulations.

For the subject, the object's "proper" innocence survives
because the object had already endured some actual "improper"

aggression, such as scorn, ill-treatment, or disappointment from different people, as the result of disgrace, separation, and/or death. The topological structures of various crypts emerge differently from particular, inherited contexts. The potential for one or both of Poe's parents working as socially disapproved actors to receive such insults remains great. The subject's unambivalent and inadmissible love suffers a traumatic disruption that encourages the subject's aggression and hatred to store up the memories of the object as its most prized possession. The crypt usually holds securely unless an auxiliary object serving as a prop also disappears. The analysts claim that then "faced with the threat of the crypt collapsing, the whole ego becomes a tomb, concealing the object of its secret love beneath its own contours" ("Introjection--Incorporation" 14). As an interminable grief and a refusal to let go of the memories of loss, melancholia follows cryptic collapse with the fusing of the ego and the object of inclusion. Sometimes, this leds to suicide. Never speaking of the most precious possession, the ego "will display its misery, expose its gaping wound, [and] broadcast its universal guilt" (14). The subject "acts out" or expresses his or her memorial version of the loss attributed to the object upon losing the subject.

Speaking from the grave, some of Poe's characters explain their losses as they fall away from life. Also accounting for the spoken and unspoken crimes of some of Poe's narrators,

this assumption of the responsibility of the dead explains the

paradoxical distribution of guilt in melancholia and, as the

analysts note, accounts for Freud's

> surprise that the melancholic feels not the slightest
> shame for all the horrors of which he accuses himself.
> It now becomes clear: the more the object is portrayed as
> a victim of suffering and misery (because of his yearning
> for what he has lost, being the implication), the more
> the subject has to be proud of--"He is going through all
> that because of losing me!" The melancholic acts out--to
> show its magnitude--the object's grief at having lost
> him. (15)

Lending his body to the phantom, the melancholic subject

seems to inflict perverse suffering on himself. The guilt of

the innocent encrypted object does not appear as the subject's

fault, but for love of the object, the subject proudly bears

the seemingly lost object's responsibility. Because the

object became a victim and because the responsibility does not

belong to the subject, the melancholic does not feel the shame

connected to the flaws he accuses himself of. Morella's

husband seems strangely caught up in a similar disconnection.

The analysts claim that "the melancholic becomes this

mad phantom incarnate, in terms of all that he [the

object/subject] endured 'for him'" (15). According to the

therapists, the subject must misdirect and guard against all

those who would approach the crypt. The missing object speaks

anasemically through the screen of the subject. If the

subject recognizes the inalienable narcissistic property

treasured by the entombed memories and allows the experience's

objective counterparts to become figurative words, then the

talking cure can allegedly fecalize the tensions that hold the most valued crypt in place.

<u>Ghostly Gaps</u>

In Abraham and Torok's cryptic mourning suspended from a particular interplay between introjection and incorporation, grief, in order to maintain the lost object, builds a secret vault from memories of images, words, and feelings tainted with guilty pleasures and traumatic shame. The embodied variety of particular preservative crypts seems almost unlimited. As responses to "an illegitimate sexual scene," the first kinds of encryption investigated by Abraham and Torok operated under a "double impossibility: to make the scene into an admissible ideal or to reveal it and, thereby, destroy the libidinal ideal" ("A Poetics of Psychoanalysis" 10). While the unspeakability of a child's loss curbed neurosis and its relinquishing apparently supplanted "the betrayal of both the libidinal ideal and any wish for revenge," a resistant tension in these early cases appeared between proper and improper behaviors, for "[p]reservative repression safeguards public opinion, while the fetish, a most ingenious conceit, reduces the danger of a 'cosmic cataclysm' to a harmless oddity capable of reviving desire" (10). However, Abraham and Torok soon found additional, less fetishistic, necrophiliac crypts. Freer from aggression, these melancholic crypts emerge when "the blameless and

guiltless object [of love] . . . , after the idyll, left the subject for good reason, so to speak, or in spite of himself" (10). Innocent of abandonment or desertion, this idealized object produces an aggression-free endocryptic identification. While preservative, this guilt-free encryption calls on the individual for a minimal repressive effort. If subjects benefit personally from some unutterable favor, an inability to put their unforgettable situation into words may result in a denial of both the love and loss, the pleasure and suffering. Thus in order to preserve the absent, but encrypted, love, a seemingly idealized indifference comes to haunt pain and pleasure, life and death with a melancholic apathy. If self-destructive subjects suffer "a disappointment in their object, in their sincerity or value," then deprived of even a hope of acknowledgement, the doubly locked and encrypted subjects will "desperately try to destroy what is dearest to them" (11). The blame and guilt of such an aggressively bound encryption, under a repeated disappointment, can lead to suicide or an actively self-destructive and perverse depression bordering on suicide. With such shame- and guilt-laden encryptions, cautiously nonprojective therapists may receive assistance in some cases from "a trend of covert aggression directed against the object, [that] remains in the deserted partner" (11). Thus, the range of encryptions engages the forces of denial,

self-destruction, anger, depression, blame, and guilt that frequently accompany loss and mourning.

Although the subject seems to conceal and guard the unutterable encryption, as we have seen, the identity of the encrypted object envelops and becomes enveloped by the identity of the subject, and so the traumatic tension between their shared incorporation and introjection appears through the anasemic reflections of all the subject's topological arrangements or designs. Permeating the subject and the subject's fabrications and articulations, such affective traces suggest the crypt's dynamics of blame, anger, depression, guilt, or shame.

With the disappearance of an auxiliary support, an approaching cryptic collapse, and a reenactment of the encrypting trauma, these structures help account for textual interventions or interruptions of continuance through eruptions of the unknown and unspeakable that accompany them. Past the normal senses, by attending to the way these oral dynamics become embodied or emerge through a crisis, the patient analyst or reader can infer from a particular context some contours and designs of the cryptically secreted loss from the subject. Through a careful consideration of the conveyances, these hauntings and whisperings call reflectively to the responsive reader for an adoptive rapport, an identification. Similar to the way some almost inexpressible hypnogogic reveries or fancies can get articulated into

language, like an under-current of phantoms and naiad voices, these evanescent and supernal shadows of shadows can whisper and reflect in part their mysteriously encrypted secrets through textual designs.

Abraham and Torok address several disturbing features bordering on the telepathic, which they term phantom effects, that can accompany crypts. Through vibrations and rhythms these unsituated memories convey telesthetic impressions from distant losses and inheritances through necrophiliac and cryptic spaces without the usual operations of the senses. Exchanging the terms analyst and patient for reader and text generates interpretative implications for translation and transmission as the psychoanalysts try to explain these ghastly conveyances (etymologically ghastly and ghostly derive from the German _Geist_ or spirit):

> This image of the "phantom"--meant at first to point out
> a rift (inflicted upon the listening analyst [reader] by
> some secret of the patient [text] which could not be
> revealed) that creates a formation in the unconscious of
> the listener--lent itself to a variety of theoretical
> elaborations. The analyst, readying himself to be keyed
> to the dictates of the couch, is surely, in some
> respects, comparable to a child maturing on the psychic
> nourishment received from his parents. Should the child
> have parents "with secrets," parents whose speech is not
> exactly complementary to their unstated repressions, he
> will receive from them a gap in the unconscious, an
> unknown unrecognized knowledge--a _nescience_--subject to
> a form of "repression" before the fact. (17)

Although this analogical countertransference assumes a constancy between the unconscious repressions of the parents and their speech such that a gap may appear in their alleged complementary relation, it seems likely that a child may

detect and assimilate repressed and unspoken desires in the parents' characters. Attuned to an unspoken rift in the family rhythms, the child inherits an unrecognized knowledge, a silently preservative repression. Passing these shared layers of assimilated repressions through various generations sets the stage for a child's differentiated emotional and intellectual discernments. The economies of most so-called co-dependent dynamics appear to pass through societies and families similarly. While separating this "'repression' before the fact" from the culturally inherited contexts and values in general seems difficult at best, family secrets have effects on a family's dynamics and affect a family's children even if they remain consciously unaware of the secrets. These encrypted enbodiments of crime and guilt convey an uncertain violence and aggression traumatized around losses. With ethical and political implications this cryptic passage also conveys cultural inheritances in general. Assigning "proper" ownership to such adoptive processes becomes particularly bewildering. At any rate, to the extent of a reader's "creative" imagination, forbearance, or sufferance, the cryptic text remains open on reflection to share its particular necrophiliac inheritances and usually conveys with its imaged embodiment a formation of guilt or shame indicating an unknown gap or rift. Depending on a shared inheritance of images, the necrophiliac reflects a diffusive trust in these common embodiments, but shaken by a memorial betrayal, the

bearer of a crypt considers these common images with a traumatized and imaginative loss.

At the limits of their shadowy contours, these inherited rifts or gaps suggest an enforced collective discontinuation of consciousness in what appears, for whatever strictures, abject, improper, or shameful. Although unspoken, such repressed crimes or traumatic secrets insistently and indirectly demand attention and have persistent, disruptive influences through their embodiments. The source of these responses lies lost in the heterogeneously layered, but partially discernable, embodiments of individual and cultural dreams and values. Abraham and Torok note the spectral necromancy of these rifts and gaps on their recipients:

> The buried speech of the parent becomes (a) dead (gap), without a burial place, in the child. This unknown phantom comes back from the unconscious to haunt and leads to phobias, madness, and obsessions. Its effects can persist through several generations and determine the fate of an entire family line. (17)

Whether individual, familial, or cultural, this inherited necrophilia (the attachment to a cryptic structure) haunts memory with effects that seem to lack a proper situation or location. Unspeakability accompanies this important burial. Unacknowledged and faintly capable of articulation, an encrypted loss implicates an abandonment or death whose adopted rhythms unaccountably haunt its subject(s) with signs through the cryptic topography. Although these ghost effects do not necessarily belong to the repression of a haunted subject, they do speak with more than one voice through the

subject's unconscious with various kinds of telesthetic ventriloquisms. Although homeless, but lodged in the subject's recollections, these phantom manifestations belong, somewhat more properly, to the encrypted parental unconscious.

In "Fors" Derrida terms this cryptic haunting in which a crypt "belongs" to someone else heterocryptography (xxxi). Through this telesthetic conveyance a particular and individual cryptic inheritance merges with the more general and shared necrophiliac space arising from language and culture. Commingling memory and imagination, this layered ventriloquism may account psychologically for some so-called extrasensory manifestations. Clairaudience and spectral appearances in Poe's tales seem to emerge as such ghost effects. For Poe, such reflective specters and echoing ventriloquisms appear to constitute the hopeful and desperate dream of reading.

Abraham and Torok's concepts of introjection, incorporation, endocryptic identification, and ghost effects help account for the operation of loss in Poe's texts. By positioning the outside object inside the subject as an absent inclusion, these concepts at once open the individual identity up to more general appropriative contexts and seal it off from them. Yet the inclusion's dividing wall of conservative repression creates a particular structure for these conversions. Assessing Abraham and Torok's placement of the crypt, Derrida observes in "Fors":

> The inner safe (the Self) has placed itself outside the crypt, or, if one prefers, has constituted "within itself" the crypt as an outer safe. One might go on indefinitely switching the place names around in this dizzying topology (the inside as the outside of the outside, or of the inside; the outside as the inside of the inside, or of the outside, etc.), but total confusion is not possible. The parietal partitions are <u>very</u> solid. (xix)

While the attempt to assign certain values in this abyssal topology confounds with giddiness any assured placement of responsibility to either the subject or the object, the strategies of introjective assimilation structure both the subject and object around a loss that haunts the caretaker of the crypt with uncanny and strange appearances of the dead. The secret of the absence of the crypt tends to suspend assertions of certainty and vertiginously haunts ideal assurances with doubt. The conflicts between the conscious self and the encrypted memorial of memories lead to a tortured resistance and an interminable grief. The loss of the mother and the emptiness of language call for subjects and objects to devise structural strategies for enduring or surviving under a perpetual mourning.

These structural strategies result in particular topological keepings of memories, a memorial architectonics. Not only do they help account for the arrangements of textual structure, they also help account for the structures of reading, indeed any regard. Without incorporative resistances, however, meaning could accept and introject more of the effects of absence.

These theories about the effects of the early childhood loss of a primary caretaker help situate the emotional structures around which later developments accrue. They all suggest in some detail the serious structural disturbances of the child's sense of continuity and trust in relation to its oral dependence on an idealized object, the primary caretaker. Under the influence of loss, the dynamic tensions between introjection and incorporation reflect losses similar to those the idealist acknowledges in trying to deal with skeptic's arguments for suspension. The effect of loss on the developing child uncovers the contextual hypotheses of constancy needed for the foundation of a subject's identity, the acquisition of language, and later assignments of responsibility. Perhaps incohately, the bodily processes of introjection remain. The analyst's theories also suggest the life-long persistence of the memories of this loss through an incorporation of the images of the departed. These included images of memory seem to take on ghostly hauntings of their own that maintain the child's connections with this most cherished inheritance. Poe seems mournfully aware of his parental loss and its seriousness. He also writes mournfully about the oscillating processes involved in the painful loss of his wife, Virginia.

Poe's Letters

Poe's accounts of the deaths of his parents and his wife should interest readers as background for his approach to mourning. His views of his losses indicate his conscious awarenesses about his own mourning. Poe explains the deaths of his parents in a letter to William Poe, his second cousin: "My father David died when I was in the second year of my age. . . . Our mother died a few weeks before him. Thus we [his brother and sister included] were left orphans at an age when the hand of a parent is so peculiarly requisite" (Ostrom 1 68). This orphanage and abandonment by death at 35 months has profound effects on a child's trust and subsequent development. In a letter to Beverley Tucker, Poe responds to Tucker's mention of his mother's name:

> In speaking of my mother you have touched a string to which my heart fully responds. To have known her is to be an object of great interest in my eyes. I myself never knew her--and never, knew the affections of a father. Both died (as you may remember) within a few weeks of each other. I have many occasional dealings with Adversity--but the want of parental affection has been the heaviest of my trials. (1 79)

The opening sentence of this passage paraphrases the epigraph to "The Fall of the House of Usher." With a vibrant heart, Poe articulates rather precisely and consciously his want and his orphanage. As his heaviest trial Poe seems to accept with appropriate affect the adversity of not having parental guidance. Contrasting with the sentimentally assumed images

of the loving mother-and-baby bond, if the death-orphaned infant survives, it feels the traumatic loss of its beloved and constant nurturer and longs for a ghostly resumption, at least until the disillusioned and distrustful child adopts as well as it can to its disrupted circumstances.

In a letter responding to George Eveleth's accusations of periodic drunkenness, Poe, an admitted alcoholic, justifies his drinking bouts in terms of his wife's recoveries and relapses with tuberculosis:

> Six years ago, a wife, whom I loved as no ever loved before, ruptured a blood-vessel in singing. Her life was despaired of. I took leave of her forever & underwent all the agonies of her death. She recovered partially and I again hoped. At the end of a year the vessel broke again--I went through precisely the same scene. Again in about a year afterward. Then again--again--again & even once again at varying intervals. Each time I felt all the agonies of her death--and at each accession of the disorder I loved her more dearly & clung to her life with more desperate pertinacity. But I am constitutionally sensitive--nervous in a very unusual degree. I became insane, with long intervals of horrible sanity. During these fits of absolute unconsciousness I drank, God only knows how often or how much. As a matter of course, my enemies referred the insanity to the drink rather than the drink to the insanity. I had indeed, nearly abandoned all hope of a permanent cure when I found one in the <u>death</u> of my wife. This I can & do endure as becomes a man--it was the horrible never-ending oscillation between hope & despair which I could <u>not</u> longer have endured without the total loss of reason. In the death of what was my life, then, I received a new but--oh God! how melancholy an existence. (2 356)

Many of these themes play throughout the deaths presented in Poe's stories. An act of art, singing an unspecified song, triggers Virginia's decline into death. The various approaches to death might have given Poe an uncanny opportunity to examine in painful detail the irrationally

dynamic oscillations between despair and hope of anticipatory mourning. He associates the loss of reason with the seemingly never-ending oscillations between his hopes and fears for Virginia's survival. Wavering between the affirmations of her repeatedly hoped for recovery and the doubts about her permanently leaving forever, Poe claims he responded by vacillating between a clinging and desperate pertinacity, a horrible sanity, and nervous fits of insanity, absolute unconsciousness, during which he drank. While typical of some alcoholics' rationalizations of self-medication and blackouts, Poe attributes his drinking to a nervous loss of control or a fit of insanity that as a condition preceded his periodic drinking. Although he admits to a constitutional "nervousness," the co-dependent agitation preceding the abuses of alcohol addiction fits in well with the fact that alcoholism often covers an oral disorder that does not necessarily imply the total loss of reason. Thus Poe knows that, normatively, the apparent loss of the culturally "proper" reason becomes a mark of madness. Acting on this derangement, he also knows the fascination of going over the verge of the "proper" and into an unconscious loss of control.

Poe finds a certain cure in the "death" of his beloved wife. The appeal to god seems as much a groan or a lament as a praise of thanksgiving for relief. Based on the loss that had split his desperate life between hope and fear, this permanent cure opens upon a new and depressed survival based

on haunting memories, uncannily doubling in their insistent similarities, and the acceptance of emptiness, unreliability, doubt, orphanage, and loss surrounding absence. Thus, the absence of death provides a certain remedy for the barely endurable oscillations by substituting a novel and maleficent melancholy. The grotesque and "improper" terms of such a melancholia seem to find inscription in Poe's writings.

From Mourning to Doubt

Stemming from mourning's unimaginable loss, the effects of horrible sanity and unconscious fits of insanity can unsettle any possible constancy. Disturbing the relational affirmations of feelings and thoughts, grief and distrustful doubt can break the entrancements of ordinary language, whether written or spoken, listened to or read. Words in whose powerful effects Poe places his entire faith led him to believe, however, in the possible embodiment of evanescent fancies bordering on the inarticulable and the unutterable. Anasemically engaging the processes of introjection and the fantasies of incorporation, neither simply literal nor metaphorical, the memorial and memorable effects of words become strangely lodged between embodiments and reflections, between materialities and spiritualities. Enfolding the co-dependencies inherited from the vanished, "The Power of Words," one of Poe's dialogues of the dead, and Poe's mention

of Mrs. Hemans' "The Sceptic" suggest the connection between the losses of love and the losses of knowledge and faith.

As shown in the introduction, neither imagination nor fancy create, and as both appear relatively and intuitively felt and known, neither seems clearly distinct. Later in the readings of the three tales, we will attend to the upper-currents of empiricism and fancy as each narrative viewpoint regards the haunting reflections and echoes accompanying cadaverous wastes and traceless charnels. Here in a cryptic contrast, we will look at the ghostly viewpoints of the deceased Agathos and Oinos as they consider the dreamy embodiments of desire. After Agathos tries to orient the newly deceased Oinos to the limits and indefinite extensions of any movement or ethereal impulse in dreamless Aidenn, he turns the novice's attention toward the material power of words:

> Agathos.--[W]hile I spoke, did there not cross your mind some thought of the physical power of words? Is not every word an impulse on the air?
> Oinos.--But why, Agathos, do you weep?--and why--oh why do your wings droop as we hover above this fair star --which is the greenest and yet most turbulent of all we have encountered in our flight? Its brilliant flowers look like a fairy dream--but its fierce volcanoes like the passions of a turbulent heart.
> Agathos.--They are!--They are! This wild star--it is now three centuries since with clasped hands, and with streaming eyes, at the feet of my beloved--I spoke it-- with a few passionate sentences--into birth. Its brilliant flowers are the dearest of all unfulfilled dreams, and its raging volcanoes are the passions of the most turbulent and unhallowed of hearts. (VI 143-44)

What Oinos takes as metaphorical, Agathos affirms as literal. In mournful tears, Agathos spoke the star, the word-thing,

into embodiment. His dearest unfulfilled dreams of all as aesthetic flowers and his unhallowed passions as diffusive, raging eruptions reflect his attempt to appease his unsatisfied desire before his unobtainable beloved. Between the doubled spiritual viewpoints, these flowers and fiery flows seem neither simply literal nor metaphorical because the ideal that might guarantee or sanctify the definitive status of the passionate sentences lies lost. If this seems to derive some positive identity from the negative, it does not. As they cross the mind, the unhallowed and dreamy forces that seem to "create" or haunt embodied entities remain suspended and lost in the mediating heterogeneity of what appears as infinite matter. Before the fluidity of loss, the fiery hardihood of dreamy passions (XVI 276) makes possible and limits the embodied and reflective assumptions capable of hypothesizing the utmost conceivable expanses of space: "a shadowy and fluctuating domain, now shrinking, now swelling, in accordance with the vacillating energies of the imagination" (XVI 204).

Entangling structures of introjection and incorporation, of embodiment and reflection, and of attraction and repulsion, shadowy memories engage the excessive desire as a dreamy passion shrinking and swelling with loss. This affective mourning marks Agathos' discourse on the heterogeneous limits of knowledge at the beginning of "The Power of Words":

> Oinos.--[I]n this existence, I dreamed that I should
> be at once cognizant of all things, and thus at once
> happy in being cognizant of all.
> Agathos.--Ah, not in knowledge is happiness, but in
> the acquisition of knowledge! In for ever knowing, we
> are for ever blessed; but to know all were the curse of
> a fiend.
> Oinos.--But does not The Most High know all?
> Agathos.--That (since he is The Most Happy) must be
> still the one thing unknown even to HIM.
> Oinos.--But, since we grow hourly in knowledge, must
> not at last all things be known?
> Agathos.--Look down into the abysmal distances!
> . . . Even the spiritual vision, is it not at all points
> arrested by the continuous golden walls of the universe?
> --the walls of the myriads of the shining bodies that
> mere number has appeared to blend into unity? (VI 139)

Seeking to obtain all, whether of passion or knowledge, appears as a blessing while uncertainty remains. To obtain all, and thus to end the sustenance made possible by the processes of doubt and longing, becomes a curse. However, with Poe's ultimate impossibility of conception, any absolute possession or final pleasure or pain lies out of the utmost expansive capacity of mediated creatures, including God.

These connections between trust and faith, distrust and doubt, do not originate with Poe. Mrs. Hemans' "The Sceptic" uses them in an attempt to encourage a Christian faith based on the mother-son bond. As Poe's works share many common themes with the British poet and employes her texts to evaluate the poetry of Mrs. L. H. Sigourney and Mrs. Norton, it seems safe to assume that he read many of her works. In his review of Chorley's Memorials of Mrs. Hemans, Poe recounts an anecdote:

> During the latter part of her life a gentleman called
> upon her and thanked her with great earnestness for the

serious benefit he had derived from "[T]he Sceptic,"
which he stated to have been instrumental in rescuing him
from gross infidelity. (IX 198)

Without claiming that Poe does or does not identify with the
gentleman's rescue from infidelity, gross or subtle, it seems
that the poem at least caught his attention.

Urging doubters to a gospel assurance, "Let Thy word
control" (253), Mrs. Hemans ends the poem with a nurturing
mother teaching her trusting son the inspired and "immortal
lays":

> She bids the prayers of infancy arise,
> Tell of his name, who left his Throne on high,
> Earth's lowliest lot to bear and sanctify,
> His love divine, by keenest anguish tried,
> And fondly say--"My child, for thee He died!" (258)

While the poet ignores orphanage and the want of parental
affection in this poem, the earthly duplication of divine
mothering seems to set the way for the maintenance of faith in
adversity. This mother-son bond contrasts with Poe's
depictions of the treatment children receive, such as seen by
Morella's orphaned daughter or the child in "The Assignation"
who falls or gets thrown into the under-currents of a Venetian
canal.

With the crucifixion as an ideal, the poet affirms that
when the cup of trembling approaches, this trust serves as the
rocklike foundation for the flight to God's love and peace:

> . . . if still, when life was young,
> Faith to thy bosom, as her home, hath sprung,
> If Hope's retreat hath been through all the past,
> The shadow by the Rock of Ages cast,
> Father, forsake us not! (254)

Avoiding the problems of disrupted mothering, perhaps the lowliest lot, Mrs. Hemans turns to difficulties proud doubters confront at death. She asks:

> When years, with silent might, thy frame have bow'd,
> And o'er thy spirit cast their wintery cloud,
> Will Memory soothe thee on thy bed of pain
> With the bright images of pleasure's train? (248)

If trust gets considered as the pleasurable memories of a childhood with dependable mothering, the answer seems affirmative, but a loving faith seems to transcend earthly memory. Turning trust and hope toward love, she warns:

> But thou whose thoughts have no blest home above!
> Captive of earth! and canst thou not dare to <u>love?</u>
> To nurse such feelings as delight to rest,
> Within that hallow'd shrine--a parent's breast,
> To fix each hope, concentrate every tie,
> On one frail Idol--destined but to die;
> Yet mock that faith that points to worlds of light,
> Where severed souls, made perfect, re-unite? (248)

If the skeptic prays to the Divine as his soul pines "in dungeons, 'midst the shade / Of such deep night as man for man hath made" and remains "[i]n its own dread abyss of darkness chain'd" (250), then like Plato's prisoner emerging from the cave, the dazzling light will overpower and blind until adopting the transcendent faith, the soul passes through its trembling adjustment. If not, if reason wanders from faith and the earthly nature gains sway, then "the vacant eye / By mind deserted," "[t]he wild delirious laughter of despair," and "[t]he mirth of frenzy" appear to indicate an "awful ruin --one lost mind / Whose star is quench'd" (251). The anticipation of death becomes a test of this faith. A faith

in science, the poet's lyre, power, or fame that excludes God's surety leads the soul to rage, agony, and despair. If the lent light of the Savior's love vanishes, then at an extreme the "ruin'd tenement" remains left to its own destruction:

> . . . breathing, moving, lingering yet,
> A thing we shrink from--vainly to forget!
> --Lift the dread veil no further--hide, oh! hide
> The bleeding form, the couch of suicide! (253)

With a censorious propriety, she tells the reader: "Approach not, gaze not--lest thy fever'd brain / Too deep that image of despair retain" (253). Hoping for a good death and fearful of a bad one, a pilgrim finds the ordeal of dying an effective test for faith.

Setting up an identification with those orphaned and secluded from ideal mothering or parenting, from the faith as depicted by those like Mrs. Hemans, Poe's texts try to feel and think about a strangely marginalized mourning and doubt verging on the nihility of a final loss. Not simply a divine curse, a scientific constant, mathematical zero, linguistic negation, or mysterious cipher, this nihility as a phantasmic encounter makes any cherished ideal possible and absolutely marks it as incomplete and unobtainable. Emerging from past sensible perception, feeling, and conception, memory as an articulated reflection and embodiment structured by the effects of loss engages ideal feelings and thoughts through the shadows of affective mournings and skeptical doubts. Strangely exceeding the identity of any idealized subject or

object, readings and writings relate and respond to this
heart-felt want or longing that seems unfounded and never-
ending.

Two Psychocritics Read Poe

To assess how psychoanalytic approaches try to come to
terms with the impossibility of conceptualizing loss, as Poe
articulates it, requires a consideration of relevant
psychocriticisms, particularly those of Marie Bonaparte and
Nicolas Abraham, and attention to certain of Freud's
assumptions.

Poe's writings have long served as a testing-ground for
psychoanalytic theories. For the curious, evaluations of some
pre-1970's attempts to deal adequately with Poe appear in
Arthur Lerner's facile Psychoanalytically Oriented Criticism
of Three American Poets: Poe, Whitman, and Aiken that looks at
psychostudies by Bonaparte, Pruette, Lindsay, and Krutch and
in Roger Forclaz's more informative "Edgar Poe et la
Psychoanalyse" that considers the above psychocritics, except
Lindsay, plus fifteen more writers. With varying degrees of
projective reflection and appreciation of loss, no shortage of
such studies has developed since the seventies. Many of these
ad hominem studies diligently attack reconstructed images of
what they imagine as Poe's person and character. Despite
their flogging about and general lack of appreciation of loss

in Poe, some of these psychocriticisms do pose interesting questions.

Of course, with its laconic foreword by Freud who refers to Poe, "a great writer with pathologic trends," as one of "creative genius" and among "exceptionally endowed individuals" (xi), Marie Bonaparte's <u>The Life and Works of Edgar Allan Poe: A Psycho-Analytic Interpretation</u> remains the monumental classic since the general canonical acceptance of psychoanalytic criticism in the early seventies. Bonaparte communicated frequently with Freud while writing the book. She seems to sense that Freud's view of loss and death stood on the line in her interpretative psychobiography. Acknowledging the function of loss in his life and work, she claims basically that Poe had an oedipal fixation, as the result of unresolved anal and oral trauma, that resulted in a sado-necrophilia. She realizes that grievous necrotrauma connects to mourning one's ideal object of beloved constancy when she cites Jones: "'The most normal form of necrophilia . . . seems to be not much more than an extension of the part love plays in mourning; the frantic refusal to accept the event and to separate for ever from the beloved'" (693).

Not all such refusals operate unconsciously or with denial. After mentioning Herodotus, King Herod, Charlemagne, Kleist, de Sade, and Hugo, Bonaparte writes elegantly on the larger importance of necrophilia for society:

> Now it is just the fact that this form of necrophilia is
> dealt with in literature and legend which attracts our

> notice.   If it has thus been raised to the rank of a
> myth, it must be because it responds to a latent human
> ideal; that of love surviving the grave and eternal
> fidelity.
>   This is the attenuating circumstance in necrophilia
> and what makes it morally and aesthetically acceptable,
> even poetical: as though this last of its forms were a
> supreme sort of love. (694)

Thus, necrophilia becomes a desperately ideal hope that love
and eternal fidelity might survive death. Probably, the
scientific psychoanalyst regards this endeavor as a kind of
narcissistic   magic.   Necrophilia   supposedly   operates
acceptably in poetic, aesthetic, and moral realms, perhaps,
because   of   their   apparently   regressive   or   ideally
hypercritical functions.

I use necrophilia more generally to suggest the shared
attraction for traditions and/or inheritances that bring
people together when they imagine they have that legacy in
common, even if they resist their attraction. Derived from
the   departed,   these   necrophiliac   inheritances   include
biological genes, family members, languages, attitudes,
values, and cultural and social mores and institutions. Thus,
most, if not all, of what people regard as themselves they
assimilate in respect to contexts acquired from the dead.

Bonaparte recognizes the seriousness of the connection
between   death,   anxieties,   and   introjection.   She   also
recognizes two types of necrophilia in Poe:

> Thus, throughout Poe's life, as we readily see, two kinds
> of necro-philia were present in him, though latent and
> transferred from object to object; the necrophilia of
> fidelity and sado-necrophilia proper. One, in effect,
> does not exclude the other, and fidelity to the love

> object may manifest itself in all the numerous ways love
> is expressed. (694)

Bonaparte marks Poe's oscillations between hope and despair or, in her terms, necrophilic fidelity and sadism. That fear and anxiety attach to active aggression, sado-necrophilia, does not miss her. She knows that introjected and projected ideals and enemies, "good" and "bad" objects, usually receive the brunt of these violences. It seems that even psychoanalysis engages in these gestures itself as it condemns the allegedly impotent, pathological genius of Poe with faint praise. Of course, this does not deny that Poe had problems, as he himself admits in his letters.

Poe's attitude about the rashness of positivism, hobbled by its inductive methodology and inadequate demonstration, would function implicitly as a criticism of Freud's assumptions just as psychocritics have extended Freud's theoretical assumptions to evaluate Poe and his works. Frustrated with the seemingly "mistaken" applications of psychoanalytic theory to Poe's works, Mario Praz accurately situates this encounter with his question, "What, after all, is psychoanalysis but a <u>flamboyant</u> development of positivism?" (380). Interested in the intuitive principles of investigation and the methodologies of its science, Poe would have condemned positivism, and its reified notions of death and absence, much as he treats the perplexed and empirically-oriented narrator of "The Fall of the House of Usher." Clearly, Praz does not appreciate the pleasures of theoretical

encounters in which he engages. But, perhaps, interpreting Freud's studies as positive science misses their literary intuitions. For this possibility of regarding Freud, Poe might have had more empathy.

At any rate, in reading Poe, Bonaparte has difficulties with the traditional notion of introjection. Usually she avoids using the terms introjection and incorporation. Once, however, reaching far beyond the barriers of language acquisition, she tries to situate Poe's difficulties in suffocating womb fantasies. Although in <u>Beyond the Pleasure Principle</u> Freud had unsolvable troubles in assigning pleasure to either the life or death drives, in her psychobiography Bonaparte applies introjection to unpleasure and anxiety more widely than most analysts in general, but she admits to problems in sorting out the possible sources for anxiety in Poe's works:

> Furthermore, in womb-phantasies anxiety-cathected, (which we must remember is not always the case), there enter anxiety factors other than those which originate in the "memory" of birth. Such phantasies in adults and, even, children do not exist alone, and other anxieties have been or will be experienced. . . . Birth-anxiety, for instance, is succeeded by separation-anxiety, whenever the mother absents herself from the child. Later, there appear castration fears, inspired by our upbringers, linked with the repression of our infantile sexuality. Follows the anxiety derived from conscience, issuing from the introjection of the menaces of these same upbringers and, lastly, fear of death which derives from the ego narcissistically fearful for its survival, once it has learnt that death exists: that death which the unconscious never admits. All these forms of anxiety may, through regression, fuse with womb-phantasies and that [regression of anxieties], so closely, that often it is difficult to separate them at first sight. (587)

Perhaps aware of the normative implications of the term, she mentions introjection with the conscience and not with separation anxiety or castration. Through regression the anxieties of the womb, birth, separation, castration, conscience, and death may fuse. This fusion does little to explicate the precise details of Poe's critical views or works beyond the predictably generalized concepts of psychoanalysis.

Accepting the numerous problems of "memory" in the case of the first two fears or anxieties, which psychoanalysis reading backward through development must "reconstitute" in language, Bonaparte claims that with difficulty analysis can discern the developmental levels of these fears of loss. Perhaps, she does this by keeping non-anxiety-cathected womb-fantasies in mind as a normative guide for development. While accurate enough for a general sketch of Poe's life and works in psychoanalytic terms, Bonaparte's dependent conceptual generalizations fail to pursue the specific implications of Poe's criticisms for those very terms. In short, while exercising the implications of psychoanalytic theory on Poe's writings and a reconstructed version of his person, she dismissively fails to consider his own critical theory in relation to her own assumptions. Confronting Poe's critical approaches might prove challenging indeed for psychoanalysis, especially with its perplexed and perplexing views of memory and the unconscious, the death drive, repetition, aggression, the uncanny, and telepathy.

Abraham and Torok respond anew to these problems as they diffuse through psychoanalytic theories. In "Psychoanalytic Esthetics: Time, Rhythm, and the Unconscious," Abraham's review of Poe's "The Raven" makes sense in this context. Although hampered by his continued distinction between the genuine and the simulation, Abraham does stretch psychoanalytic theory toward an improved view of loss and mourning. Nicolas Abraham locates Poe's cryptic effects in "The Raven" and explains Poe's dissembling in a knowing manner:

> This is what explains the poem's Janus-like duplicity: the loss of the loved one is its manifest content, the loved one's incorporation its latent sense. Just let the poem try to lure us into an insomniac fit of anguish. We know that we are faced with a necrophile who plays at dissembling. And this game is all important to him. The authenticity of this very need to mystify touches us to the depths of our soul. (13)

In addition to questions about who lures and mystifies whom, it seems as if Poe's texts might address the effects of mourning with fewer normative and positivistic assumptions. Relying on Freud's assurances about the relations of memory to the unconscious, Abraham views the poem as the work of a dissembling necrophile. Apparently, writing about the memories of lost loves qualifies subjects for this doubtful distinction. By avoiding such assumptions, Poe comes to a view of loss and mourning less hampered by such resistances. After all, Poe would only have to ask what gives psychoanalysis the right to judge authenticity as opposed to duplicity and dissembling in the absence of any demonstrable

concept of the unknowable. If psychoanalysts respond certainly with normative, positivistic interventions, Poe might well acquiesce to their demands as dreams lacking any ultimate certainty.

The Unconscious Memory Encounters Negation and Loss

Freud felt that the positive Unconscious did not acknowledge or recognize any negativity or absence. Only the ego might do that. As Freud's notion of memory gets retained in the theories of Bonaparte, Abraham, and Torok and effects their evaluations of identity, it becomes important here to consider his hypotheses in relation to memory and the unconscious. Noting the breakdown of his analogy of the mystic writing pad and memory, Freud claims that,

> We need not be disturbed by the fact that in the Mystic Pad no use is made of the permanent traces [of memory] of the notes that have been received; it is enough that they are present. There must come a point at which the analogy between an auxiliary apparatus of this kind and the organ which is its prototype will cease to apply. It is true, too, that once the writing has been erased, the Mystic Pad cannot "reproduce" it from within; it would be a mystic pad indeed if, like our memory, it could accomplish that. None the less, I do not think it too far-fetched to compare the celluloid and waxed paper cover with the system Pcpt.-Cs. [perceptual consciousness and consciousness] and its protective shield, the wax slab with the unconsciousness behind them, and the appearance and disappearance of the writing with the flickering-up and passing-away of consciousness in the process of perception. ("The 'Mystic Writing-Pad'" XIX 230-31)

Apparently while memories in consciousness and perceptual consciousness remain accessible and do not last, unconscious memories remain permanently present if mostly unaccessible.

The attribution to memory of mystical powers of reproduction and accomplishment seems foggy and nebulous indeed. The unerasable presence of the permanent memory traces in the unconscious serves as a key assumption for psychoanalytic theory. This hypothesis blocks an appreciation of the permanent effects of loss on memory.

Describing the unconscious in <u>The Interpretation of Dreams</u>, Freud claims that "The unconscious is the true psychical reality; <u>in its innermost nature it is as much unknown to us as the reality of the external world, and it is as incompletely presented by the data of consciousness as is the external world by the communications of our sense organs</u>" (V 613). If one doubts that the sense organs accurately reflect the external world or that such organs' complex communications give immediate information directly to consciousness, then one can doubt the ability to know unconscious "reality." Unless one assumes some positive access to ultimate reality, leveraging one unknown against a different unknown should leave both the external world and innermost nature unknown. Freud, however, uses his contingent and limited observations of the "data" sensed and derived by his contextual consciousness to make conceptual inferences about this incompletely presented presence and innermost unknown. The ultimate constancy or certainty obtained by this fancied overgeneralization must perforce remain nebulously discontinued.

Revealing the normative functions and the economic labor of psychoanalysis, in <u>The Interpretation of Dreams</u> Freud asserts that these mostly unknowable and incompletely presented unconscious desires always operate actively: "It is perfectly true that unconscious wishes always remain active" (V 577). Attempting to trace the structural network of these wishes, Freud believes that these wishes represent paths capable of traversal by a quantity of excitation and remain permanent: "it is a prominent feature of unconscious processes that they are indestructible. In the unconsciousness nothing can be brought to an end, nothing is past or forgotten" (V 577). Such an enduring presence of desire-laden memories must at best remain a conjecture. Poe seems to assume that memories fade and disappear. To make the Freudian assumption concerning memories implies that some omnisciently privileged observer has accessed the incompletely presented and unknown system and warrants that the closed system operates such that nothing gets forgotten or lost. To claim that in the unconscious nothing becomes either past or forgotten must have required the examination of a great deal of unavailable data to arrive at such positive inferences. Instead of admitting that he feels lost before the unknown unconscious, Freud proceeds to explain the workings of its paths of active traversal. Of course, this difficulty does not mean all of Freud's observations lack contextual support, but it must qualify all his hypothetical assertions.

Freud turns to the neuroses of hysteria to illustrate the excitation, the traversal, and discharge of the unconscious path of thoughts. Thus even though thirty years have intervened, once an excitation obtains access to the unconscious sources of emotion, a humiliation experienced thirty years before can act "exactly like a fresh one" (V 578). Again memory plays the central role: "As soon as the memory of it is touched, it springs to life again and shows itself cathected with excitation, which finds a motor discharge in an attack" (V 578). This fit or attack caused by old memories felt as fresh seems to call for intervention: "This is precisely the point at which psychoanalysis has to intervene" (V 578). Not simply assignable to the pleasure or unpleasure of the client, the foundations for this urgent demand for normative haste remain mysteriously unclear. The attack seems to threaten something psychoanalysis cherishes. As in hysteria, a similar treatment awaits those who "unconsciously" treasure prolonging the memories of lost loves and mourning. The therapist assumes that the melancholic's harboring of precious memories needs and requires intervention. That this industrious and appropriative urge to police conditions caused by "excessively" stimulated and excited wishes might itself generate more difficulties and problems with desire goes unquestioned.

Thus, Freud sees that the proper task of psychoanalysis "is to make it possible for the unconscious processes to be

dealt with finally and be forgotten" (V 578). Indeed, the necrophiliac must pose quite a challenge to this effort. Still, more generally and short of the death of the client, this task seems impossible or interminable if unconscious memories function indestructibly or without past or end. Freud views the "laborious work" of the preconscious as responsible for "the fading of memories and the emotional weakness of the impressions which are no longer recent" (V 578). Regarded as "self-evident" and explained as "a primary effect of time upon mental memory-traces," this seemingly never-ceasing labor of the fading and weakening of emotion operates "in reality [as the] secondary modifications" of the preconscious (V 578). The probably endless work of the preconscious could never hope to bring the unconscious under domination if its domain remains as unknowable as Freud seems to want to claim. This discrepancy between Freud's mystical intuitions and inferences about the unconscious memories marks his notions of the formation of the subject's identity and the normative task of the analyst.

While Poe claims that memory functions in relation to each psychological faculty and intuits fideistically that "Memories of a Destiny more vast--very distant in the by-gone time, and infinitely awful" contribute to his sense of the identity of the self-existence of the soul (XVI 312), he also believes that just as the identity of the soul emerges dreamily and incomprehensibly out of material nothingness and

spiritual deity, so too this consciousness will merge back
into the incomprehensible dreams of material nothingness and
spiritual deity. Loss operates more acceptably here than with
Freud's concepts. Poe's constraints of incomprehensibility
limit and envelop the consciousness or self-cognizance of the
soul. Thus, arriving at a different kind of narcissism based
on the possible loss of memories, Poe asserts that,

> No thinking being lives who, at some luminous point of
> his life of thought, has not felt himself lost amid the
> surges of futile efforts at understanding, or believing,
> that anything exists greater than his own soul. (XVI 312)

Undoubtably, Freud would reflect on the seemingly omnipotent
and enclosed narcissism of such a claim, but then the
inevitable narcissisms of Freud's notion of identity also rest
upon his own positive observations that stem from his own
assumptions about memory and the unknown unconscious.

Freud uses skepticism interchangeably with doubt. Doubt
operates as a repression and a resistance in the Freudian
view. His notion that doubt functions to entrench the
defenses of his patients might well apply to the partial
employment of skeptical arguments in defense of idealistic
positions, much as Counterreformation Christians pressed
skepticism into the service of the true faith. Conflating
skepticism with doubt and negativity, Freud probably sees
skeptical arguments as a type of repression like negation that
separates intellectual and affective processes. Actually few
skeptics separate the values of feeling from those of thought.
That such conscious negations and doubts might help

civilization seems to elude the pessimistic positivist, and even in <u>Civilization and Its Discontents</u> his adherence to the biological and psychological death drive conveniently leads him to dismiss the possibilities of a boundless oceanic spirituality as an infantile difficulty in separating from the mother. In "Negation" Freud claims that "[n]egation is a way of taking cognizance of what is repressed; indeed it is already a lifting of the repression, though not, of course, an acceptance of what is repressed" (XIX 235-36). Freud claims that "[t]he outcome of this is a kind of intellectual acceptance of the repressed, while at the same time what is essential to the repression persists" (236). Although his positivist essentialism maintains what, Freud believes, goes on with the unconscious, he does suggest the seeming impossibility of adequately accepting the negative. Not only does the positive unconscious operate in the unknown, the negative also remains unknown. When regarded from a positivist presupposition, the unknowable negative, like death, and the differences they might make seem reducible to repressive techniques of management. However under erasure, some emotional vestige or residue of the negated suggestively haunts the structure of the negation.

As with death and absence, the impossibility of ultimately cognizing or accepting the negation without at least a specter of the negated seems to parallel the skeptic's suspensions of judgment as dependent upon the repressed, but

hypothesized, structures of the idealist. In a similar sense, the articulations of the processes of introjection depend in part on the fantasies of incorporation. At least the phantom of rationality accompanies the skeptic's rational arguments against rationality. Assuming the introjected distinction between inside and outside and the aggressive appropriation of incorporation, Freud turns toward memory to explain the repressed presentation of the negated:

> thinking possesses the capacity to bring before the mind once more something that has once been perceived, by reproducing it as a presentation without the external object having still to be there. The first and immediate aim, therefore, of reality-testing is, not to _find_ an object in real perception which corresponds to the one presented, but to _refind_ such an object, to convince oneself that it is still there. (XIX 237-38)

Through refinding, the loss within memory doubly influences thinking, the testing of "reality." This positivist view of memory apparently accounts for his allegation that "we never discover a 'no' in the unconscious" (XIX 239). Although Freud's account makes many assumptions, memory seems implicated in the haunting images residual in negation. Negation and loss seems persistently haunted by remembered images of the lost.

The capacity for Poe's texts to absorb the main lines of psychoanalytic theories of mourning should both assure and alarm analysts. Assuringly, their theories of traumatized orality provide some systematic account of loss as reflected in Poe's writings. Alarmingly, none of their theories account for the range or variety of the approaches to loss in the

necrophiliac's writings. All too quickly, critics using a particular theory move to their theory's normative notions of having resolved or worked through the memories of mourning and then condemn Poe for his failure in coming to terms with his grief in a healthy or sane manner. Many accomplish this feat by conflating Poe's narrators or characters with Poe himself or his "narrative voice." Regarding Poe's writing as strictly expressions of an unhealthy unconscious, they fail to take into account the depicted feelings and critical stances found in Poe's writings that might apply as a critique of the very idealized ideas out of which psychoanalysis presumes to erect its projective study of subjective identity. Although still addicted to the authentic and genuine in the face of the lack of any demonstrable original or healthy subject, at least Abraham and Torok's theories of mourning engage the haunting complexities of encryption and anasemia running through the contexts describing and circumscribing the losses of death. Thus, they contribute to an improved understanding of the structural effects of mourning's response to apparent loss. Addressing some assumptions of positivism in their method, a critique started by Freud himself as a response to inadequate scientific data, both Bonaparte and Abraham add some doubts to their psychoanalytic treatments of loss in Poe's writings.

CHAPTER 2
SKEPTICISM

'Tis an infinite advantage in every controversy, to
defend the negative. If the question be out of the
common   experienced   course   of   nature,   this
circumstance   is   almost,   if   not   altogether,
decisive. By what arguments or analogies can we
prove any state of existence, which no one ever
saw, and which no way resembles any that ever was
seen? Who will repose such trust in any pretended
philosophy,   as   to   admit   upon   its   testimony   the
reality of so marvellous a scene? Some new species
of logic is required for that purpose; and some new
faculties of the mind, that they may enable us to
comprehend that logic.
        --David Hume, "Of the Immortality of the Soul"

It is laughable to observe how easily any system of
Philosophy can be proven false:--but then is it not
mournful to perceive the impossibility of even
fancying any particular system to be true.
                --Edgar Allan Poe, <u>Marginalia</u>

Regarding the regression of a mournful and never-ending

remembrance   toward   substantial   shadows,   Poe's   unsettling

memorials   to   the   aestheticized   deaths   of   cherished   women

suggest a dreamy treatment for the doubtful acceptance of the

ineradicable losses of perfection and certainty implied by the

dilemmas of skepticism.   While not repressing, denying, or

avoiding   the   negative   and   recessive   limits   to   conception,

perception,   and   possibility,   to   the   best   of   his   mournful

ability, Poe, like Freud, found in the material relations of

the sciences, geometry, and mathematics the principles that

appealed to his intellectual belief, but also sensed that these fascinations gave way to a faith in dreamy feelings and memories. In his essay contrasting classical and modern skepticism, "Scepticism, Old and New," Richard Popkin situates a similar awareness of this conjunction between intellect and affect among skeptics: "People talk as if values exist objectively. In fact, people are describing how they feel" (<u>The Third Force</u> 242). Poe recognizes this reduction of reasoned values to feeling when Monos in "The Colloquy of Monos and Una" cites Pascal as truly saying that "'<u>tout notre raisonnement se réduit à céder au sentiment</u>'" (Harrison IV 204).

Some possible meanings of idealism and skepticism, particularly Pyrrhonism, emerge within the cultural history of ideas and as situated by passages in Poe's texts. By inference, Richard H. Popkin's notions of the third force and theological and religious skepticisms can suggestively place Poe's philosophic positions within the traditions of fideistic skeptics. Intuitively aestheticized, Poe's ideas, however, seem to add a supplementary twist to these traditions.

In order to see how skepticism operates in Poe's texts as an abortion or loss of unobtainable concepts and ideals, idealism first needs consideration. Poe's criticisms will situate his views of Platonic idealism and phrenological idealism. Dismissing the former and finding fault with the latter, Poe suggests an aesthetic sense of the ideal. Poe's

fideistic skepticism emerges in relation to conceiving and concepts. After looking at the Pyrrhonic tropes and briefly viewing relevant portions of the history of skepticism, I review some of Poe's references to major skeptics in order to help situate his particular approach toward fideistic skepticism. Then after reviewing the criticisms of Poe by G. R. Thompson, Joan Dayan, and Stanley Cavell concerning the histories of art and ideas, philosophy and ethics, I will look at Alan Bailey's notion of the possibilities of a "mature" or therapeutic skepticism as a response to the classical self-refutation difficulty posed by rationalism. This therapeutic skepticism suggests the collaborations between a mournful skepticism and psychoanalysis found in my analysis of Poe's tales.

The Idealisms of Plato and Phrenology

Most notions of the ideal view it as a conception of something in its highest perfection or as a standard of perfection or excellence deserving realization or efforts at attainment. As a Platonic ideal and as a form impressed on objects, it apparently functions independently of human minds, but even these notions of the ideal require a conceiving human mind to witness its ideality. Frequently, the ideal appears as something operant only as a mental conception, an imaginary thing. This emphasis on conceiving and conception should recall Poe's criticism about concepts. The modern notion of

the idea, imported into fifteenth- and sixteenth-century England from Latin and Greek sources, had already developed in connection with the Platonic concepts of the ideal. The notion of the idea stresses a general or ideal form, pattern, or standard and a mental image, notion, or conception. Sometimes, it appears as a figure, form, or image. In these notions of the ideal and the idea, based on specular words in Greek meaning to see or behold, modern philosophical and psychological developments find their sources. The connections of the senses of the ideal as both pursuing the perfect and imaginary become important here. The close development of the notions of the idea and the ideal makes their separation virtually impossible, and the notions of idealism that have developed in modern English demonstrate their mutual influence. Idealism believes that the objects of external perception consist of ideas, in the variety of senses applied to the word idea. As a practice the notion of idealism refers to the habit or tendency toward idealizing or representing things as they might conceivably or perceivably appear and to an imaginative treatment of material in art and literature. The notions of the ideal as the imaginary or the imaginative open up possibilities for regarding the ideal aesthetically.

The connection between idealism and skepticism thus appears to depend mainly on the hinge between claims of perfection and the questions about the basis for certainty,

especially with perfection. Skeptical arguments threaten idealism with the loss of the notions of perfection and certainty. The certainty of perfection or supremeness and the certainty or constancy of the knowledge of "reality" remain at stake. While the skeptic would question the ideal as either actual or imaginary, the idealist would certainly regard it as a perfection of form or perception. Although the sides seem drawn, more or less, and the debate rages on, I propose here to follow Poe's negotiations between these camps and not to "solve" the debate.

While an admirer of Plato's accomplishments, Poe did not agree with his philosophy. In a review of Tayler Lewis's <u>Plato Contra Atheos.--Plato Against the Atheists</u>, Poe cautiously reviews the general argument of the book. He carefully explains what he regards as the purpose served by Lewis's circulation of Plato's notions:

> No one can doubt the purity and nobility of the Platonic soul, or the ingenuity of the Platonic intellect. But if the question be put to-day, what is the value of the Platonic philosophy, the proper answer is, "exactly nothing at all." We do not believe that any good purpose is answered by popularizing his dreams; on the contrary we do believe that they have a strong tendency of ill-- intellectually of course. (XII 164-65)

Poe's dreams do not seem to agree with Platonic dreams. Plato's ideal dreams for Poe tend toward an intellectual illness. Suggestively, Poe also takes Lewis to task for opposing Baconianism and the "'physical science, in league with a subtle pantheism'" (XII 165). No friend of Bacon's induction, the preambulatory epistle in <u>Eureka</u> alludes to the

scientist's Hogism; in this partisan argument Poe seems to side with the rising sciences:

> For our own parts, we vastly prefer even the noise of Bacon, the laws of Combe, or the nebula star-dust of Nichols to what Dr. Lewis will insist upon terming "the clear, simple, common-sense philosophy of Plato,"--but these things are perhaps merely matters of taste. It would be as well, however, to bear in mind the aphoristic sentence of Leibnitz [sic]--"La plupart des sectes ont raison en beaucoup de ce qu'elles avancement, mais non pas en ce qu'elles nient." (XII 165)

Reason thus becomes a tactical function of the philosophical tastes one wishes to advance or resist. Here Poe prefers material science to the Platonic idealism of Lewis. Faulting Macaulay's criticism of divinity for not operating as a progressive science, Poe distinguishes in the last section of "A Chapter of Suggestions" between science's direct arguments about "the concerns of earth, considered as man's habitation," and science's analogical arguments about "the same earth, regarded as a unit of the universe" (XIV 191).

Believing that with each advancing step science throws additional light on the ethical nature of deity "by extending the range of analogy," Poe praises the "words of the prophetic Newton" cited as explaining: "'If Natural Philosophy . . . should continue to be improved in its various branches, the bounds of moral philosophy would be enlarged also'" (XIV 192). The interconnected relations between matter and the spirit always seem to interest Poe. Frustrated by scientists' failure to pursue the universal principles of their discoveries, Poe seems keenly interested in the scientific

advances forwarded by Newton, Kepler, Laplace, Leibniz, Bacon, Cavendish, Condorcet, Price, and Priestly. However, Poe admiringly disapproves of the Platonic notions instrumental in the accepted concepts of the idea and the ideal.

Poe also thought of idealism as a variant of faculty psychology of imagination. G. Combe introduced this meaning of the ideal into phrenology to refer to the ability to conceive ideals and to imagine. In a review of Mrs. L. Miles' Phrenology, and the Moral Influence of Phrenology, Poe clearly lists ideality, along with hope and marvelousness, under the imaginative faculties. While it remains impossible to separate out what Poe accepts of phrenology and what he does not, the textual evidence suggests that he found problems with the system. While he notes phrenology's most salutary effect as "self-examination and self-knowledge" (VIII 253), he also observes more obliquely that "This classification is arranged with sufficient clearness, but it would require no great degree of acumen to show that to mere perspicuity points of vital importance to the science have been sacrificed" (VIII 254). A hint of this sacrifice registers at the beginning of "The Imp of the Perverse." Although the narrator appears, perhaps, as a madman who kills his victim for money with a poisoned candle, the first part of the essay/tale criticizes phrenology. It takes the system to task for its classificatory assumptions:

> It would have been wiser, it would have been safer to classify, (if classify we must,) upon the basis of what

> man usually or occasionally did, and was always
> occasionally doing, rather than upon the basis of what we
> took it for granted the Deity intended him to do. If we
> cannot comprehend God in his visible works, how then in
> his inconceivable thoughts, that call the work into
> being! If we cannot understand him in his objective
> creatures, how then in his substantive moods and phases
> of creation? (VI 146)

Acknowledging the inability of man to understand or "comprehend God in his visible works," this skeptical critique of a deistic classification paves the way for Poe to introduce a faculty, the perverse, that he claims phrenologists overlook.

In "The Black Cat" the murderous narrator extends the perverse past its psychological range: "Of this spirit philosophy takes no account" (V 146). Foreshadowing the problems that Freud faces with his "death drive," Poe questions the ability of phrenology to encompass this powerful irrational principle:

> Induction, a posteriori, would have brought phrenology to
> admit, as an innate and primitive principle of human
> action, a paradoxical something, which we may call
> perverseness, for want of a more characteristic term. In
> the sense I intend, it is, in fact, a mobile without a
> motive, a motive not motivirt. Through its promptings we
> act without comprehensible object; or if this shall be
> understood as a contradiction in terms, we may so far
> modify the proposition as to say, that through its
> promptings we act, for reason that we should not. In
> theory no reason can be more unreasonable; but in fact
> there is none more strong. (VI 146-47)

Not simply conflating to psychoanalytic notions of perversion, Poe likens this causally elusive, irrational element, the perverse, to the ambivalent fascination of a man on a precipitous verge with the abyss below: "because our reason

violently deters us from the brink, <u>therefore</u>, do we the more impetuously approach it" (VI 149). This fascination with precipitous loss opens up an approach/avoidance or attraction/repulsion ambivalence and oscillation in behavior. The perverse unsettles the distinction between reason and unreason. Akin to Fichte's "not-self" and like Freud's "death drive," this limiting impulse toward the unlimited has destructive consequences: "If there be no friendly arm to check us, or if we fail in a sudden effort to prostrate ourselves backward from the abyss, we plunge, and are destroyed" (VI 150). The fatal results of such an unmotivated impulse create serious problems for the rational assurances of the phrenological system.

Although Poe did not unreservedly accept the ideality of the phrenologists, he nevertheless accepts ideality as a function of the imaginative faculty. He used the system for its artistic value as Edward Hungerford notes in his article, "Poe and Phrenology." Some influence of the perverse may even find a place within imaginative concentration. Suggestively, one can fabricate an aesthetic ideal from fascinating dreams that satisfy one are <u>not</u>, but might be. In compositions these ideal things get drawn from the hypothetical or unknown by musing on reasons why such things might <u>not</u> have been. While this ideal might subordinate to the imaginative, this view of the ideal stresses the perfect, the conceptual, and the mystic less and a relation to negation and absence more. Seeking for

reasons why such things might not have been separates an unreified absence into the possibilities of loss. Perhaps destructive, this search for the supernal ideal and/or exquisitely delicate and evanescent fancies borders on the possible that is not. These passages support a notion of the ideal closely aligned with loss in Poe's works that operates neither Platonically nor rationally, but aesthetically or imaginatively.

Poe's Skepticism

The OED defines the notion of scepticism or skepticism (British and American variants of the same word both of which Poe uses) as the philosophical "opinion that real knowledge of any kind is unobtainable." While the etymology of sceptic or skeptic derives from the late Latin scepticus, literally meaning "inquiring, reflective," the term comes from the Greek meaning "watchman, mark to aim at," related to the English scope, and comes from σκέπιεσθαι, "to look out, consider." As with the ideal and the idea, the stress on specularity emphasizes the sense of sight. The substantive form defines the skeptical witness more thoroughly:

> one who, like Pyrrho and his followers in Greek antiquity, doubts the possibility of real knowledge of any kind; one who holds that there are no adequate grounds for certainty as to the truth of any proposition whatever. Also applied in a historically less correct sense, to those who deny the competence of reason, or the existence of any justification for certitude, outside the limits of the experience.

While acknowledging sensations or experiences, the skeptic addresses the grounds or reasons given for certainty and finds them insupportable or inadequate. The five tropes attributed to Agrippa or Sextus Empiricus often paradoxically guide the skeptic's inquiries and responses.

Alan Bailey in his article "Pyrrhonean Scepticism and the Self-refutation Argument" lists and briefly discusses the function of each of the tropes, the general stock and trade of skepticism. Quoting Sextus Empiricus, Bailey outlines the tropes: "the first based on discrepancy, the second on regress <u>ad infinitum</u>, the third on relativity, the fourth on hypothesis, the fifth on circular reasoning" (quoted in Bailey 28). Bailey notes that the first and third tropes based on discrepancy and relativity "are intended to set the problem up." As such, they deal with the givens of any particular account or their settings and force the problem of establishing which of the conflicting opinions appears correct. Bailey cites Sextus as claiming that the first trope "leads us to find that with regard to the object presented there has arisen, both amongst ordinary people and philosophers an interminable conflict." Unsettling constancy, this irreconcilable conflict may appear as a wild incoherence or a strange inconsistency. Considering divergent points of view, the third trope states that "the object has such or such an appearance in relation to the subject judging and to the concomitant percepts" (Bailey 28). Here the problem of

determining the "true nature" of the object through its various relative appearances, dependent at least on double viewpoints, arises. These tropes raise questions that unsettle the constant appearance of the object. The remaining three tropes "are supposed to establish that no claim is ever rationally preferable to its contrary [and] rely on principles of reasoning that are all extremely plausible." In fact the tropes seem so reasonable that philosophers have used their variants for centuries in arguing to disprove opponents' propositions. Bailey notes that "[a]lmost no one would wish to maintain that unfinished regresses of justification, circular arguments, or mere hypothesis can provide a person with a good reason to believe that some particular claim is true" (37).

Despite the fideistic elaborations of Hegel's absolute God, the special factuality of Heidegger's <u>Dasein</u>, and Gadamer's acceptance of universal circularity, such presuppositions remain circular and do not provide a rationally compelling foundation for the absolute acceptance of the truth of their beliefs. The regress develops from the confrontation with the notion that "a purported justification of some proposition carries no weight until it has been shown that it has true premisses and a valid inferential form" (Bailey 29). Sextus claims that the second trope indicates that "whereby we assert that the thing adduced as a proof of the matter proposed needs a further proof, and this again

another, and so on _ad infinitum_, so that the consequence is suspension, as we possess no starting-point for our argument" (quoted in Bailey 29). The fourth and fifth tropes block off an escape from the ever-recessive regression. The acknowledgment of regression in an argument serves as an acknowledgment of the loss of the argument.

The fourth trope based on hypothesis serves whenever "the Dogmatists, being forced to recede _ad infinitum_, take as their starting-point something which they do not establish by argument but claim to assume as granted simply and without demonstration." Here the skeptic takes the opposite assumption to whatever the dogmatist considers self-evident, primitive, or worthy of assuming. The fifth, extending that of hypothesis and based on circular reasoning or begging the question, comes into play "when the proof itself which ought to establish the matter of inquiry requires confirmation derived from that matter; in this case, being unable to assume either in order to establish the other, we suspend judgment about both" (Bailey 29). _Epochē_ labels this suspension of judgment in matters dealing with the nonevident.

Pyrrhonism as a general term operates synonymously with skepticism. Poe refers or alludes twice to Pyrrho and his beliefs. The narrator of "Ms. Found in a Bottle" claims that "the Pyrrhonism of my opinions has at all times rendered me notorious" (II 1), and in the first version of "Eleonora" the

fanciful narrator, who acquiesces to his mournful losses, calls himself Pyrro.

While Poe always refers to the skeptic Cicero in his oratorical and rhetorical contexts, a curious, perhaps phrenological, reference also appears to the Latin writer in "Dr. Tarr and Prof. Fether" when at a dinner an inmate of the insane asylum informs the visiter about the split oratorical personality of one Bouffon Le Grand:

> He grew deranged through love, and fancied himself possessed of two heads. One of these he maintained to be the head of Cicero; the other he imagined a composite one, being Demosthenes' from the top of the forehead to the mouth, and Lord Brougham from the mouth to the chin. It is not impossible that he was wrong; but he would have convinced you of his being in the right; for he was a man of great eloquence. He had an absolute passion for oratory, and could not refrain from display. (VI 65-66)

The eloquent counterbalancing of the skeptical Latin orator Cicero with the fusion at the mouth of the resistant Demosthenes, the famous Greek orator whom Poe valued for his doomed integrity of character and persistently failing Philippics, and the passionately diffusive Lord Brougham, whom Poe regarded as an overly versatile and crowd-pleasing man of letters, situates the splitting of literary interests delivered by Poe's texts. This oratorical composite reveals the unoriginal foundations or models upon which Poe draws for many of his stories. Caused by the loss of love, the deranged split between skepticism and the commitments of resistance and diffusion reflects on the problems of consistency in the display of convincing oratory and passions. This description

helps explicate the theories of the allegedly doubled or "bipart soul" so often evoked to account for Poe's "Eleonora." The suspension of judging right and wrong through oratory and the composite of divergent tendencies stress a typical "madness" found in Poe's tales of love. Cicero's reasoning seems to offset sensual diffusion and resistance.

Pyrrho and Cicero constitute Poe's major allusions to classical skeptics. The majority of his references to skepticism stem from the intellectual history developed from the Protestant Reformation. Although the Renaissance revival of skeptical views appears in Pico della Mirandola's and Cornelius Agrippa's arguments with the scholastics, as part of the intellectual response of the Catholic Counterreformation, some Catholic intellectuals, Erasmus and Hervet, used skeptical arguments to oppose the reasoning of the new Protestant faiths. Sanches, Charron, Camus, Veron, and Montaigne, the last of whom Poe cites in relation to the connection between writing and thinking at the beginning of his section on conveying dreamy fancies to memory (XVI 87), extended such arguments to claim that only through "true" faith and revelation can anything become knowable. Interestingly, both Cicero and Montaigne suggest the "possibility that all that we know is part of a dream" (Popkin "Skepticism" 453). However, the skeptical arguments quickly presented as many problems for the Catholics as for the Protestants.

Accepting the importance of these skeptical arguments, some intellectuals sought a new basis as a criterion for religious certainty. Gassendi and Mersenne developed embryonic theories of empiricism to study the world of appearances as opposed to knowledge of the "real nature of things." Francis Bacon, whom Poe loves to cite as claiming "'there is no exquisite beauty without some strangeness in the proportion'" (XVI 86 and additional places), developed methods attempting to contend with errors and yield unquestionable results. Resting on his famous cogito, Descartes developed a rationalist response to similar skeptical considerations. Skeptics attacked these rational and empirical attempts to arrive at certainty.

Poe's interests in these movements seem to center around the English responses that led to the formation of the theories of science reflected in and around the Royal Society. Although academic presentations of the period have focused almost exclusively on the conflicts between Cartesian rationalism and British empiricism, Richard Popkin in his The Third Force in Seventeenth-Century Thought argues that a group of diverse thinkers, the third force, attempted to overcome skepticism by combining "elements of empirical and rationalist thought with theosophic speculations and Millenarian interpretations of Scripture" (90-91). In and around this group of thinkers appear writers that influence Poe in various ways: Joseph Glanvill, Isaac Barrow, Robert Hooke, Henry More,

Isaac Newton, and Gottfried Leibniz. Aware of skeptical arguments, these thinkers address the relation between matter and spirit in scientific and religious terms. Noting the widening rift between rationalism and empiricism, they attempt in various ways to join mind and spirit. Their tradition continues with Robert Price, Joseph Priestly, Emanuel Swedenborg, S. T. Coleridge, and William Wordsworth, all criticized by Poe. Such writers as these of the third force strongly influenced Poe. Additional skeptics also influenced Poe. Although reviewed only briefly by Poe, Pierre Bayle, Blaise Pascal, and David Hume deserve special attention. Those additionally influenced by skepticism and mentioned by Poe remain too numerous to cover.

Poe's dilemma with skepticism centers around his attempt to infer spiritual principles from what he felt appeared as irrefutable and almost demonstrable evidence. Poe frequently draws upon geometric, mathematic, and scientific models to support his principles of faith. As suggested by Popkin, certainty encountered skeptical difficulties in terms of the senses, reason, and revelation (105). Through his responses to these terms Poe tries with acknowledged difficulties to arrive at a belief. His efforts in this direction place him in a group that Popkin calls fideistic skeptics.

In "Theological and Religious Scepticism," Popkin distinguishes between theological and religious skepticism. He claims that the sixteenth century saw a rise in a new

Pyrrhonist that "claimed to be a defender of the faith, a Christian sceptic" (150). Many of these skeptical Christians, such as Hervet, Montaigne, and Charron, based their views on those of St. Paul as seen in I Corinthians 1: 19-23. Destroying wisdom and thwarting cleverness, in this passage, God makes the wisdom of the world foolish and saves believers through the folly of what gets preached. A problem soon faced theologians as to how to receive this variant of Christianity. While several theologians welcomed this new Pyrrhonism, Popkin explains that problems loomed on the horizon:

> the new scepticism also emerged in libertin clothing. This most orthodox teaching turned up as the cover of the free-thinkers, the esprits-forts. If both sincere Christians and dubious libertins subscribed to skeptical Christianity, who could tell the believer from the non-believer? (151)

Separating the believer from the non-believer, the genuine from the counterfeit as Poe might put it, remains a problem that still disturbs many believers. Under the effects of simulation and dissimulation, the skeptical critique of the senses, reason, and revelation removes any criterion for certainty that might distinguish between the "real" and the "unreal," the sincere and the insincere, the true and the false, and the genuinely inspired and the pretended enthusiasm.

When combined with the unknown and invisible objects of idealism, this problem poses unsettling difficulties in establishing any genuine proper from an appearance of the proper. Carrying this view into the connection between

theology and religion, Popkin notes questions and problems
arise in establishing any link between belief and faith:

> And thus the problem arises, how does one tell if the
> Christian sceptic is wearing a mask, or is the knight of
> faith? The Christian sceptics share in common a view
> which I shall call "theological scepticism," a doubt
> concerning the reasons offered for the faith. The
> question at issue centers on whether one who admits to a
> theological scepticism has or has not accepted a
> "religious scepticism," a doubt concerning the faith.
> Theological scepticism does not entail religious
> scepticism. If one doubts all the reasons that may be
> offered for the faith, this does not require that one
> doubt the faith, since the factors that induce belief in
> this case may have nothing to do with the evidence for
> the belief. But, on the other hand, theological
> scepticism certainly constitutes no argument in favor of
> belief. (155)

With a similar fidelity, one may doubt all the reasons for
idealism and still not doubt idealism. The belief in an
idealism does not require any demonstration of idealism.
After looking at various standards, such as actions or the
flavor of their works, to sort the believer from the non-
believer and finding them unsatisfactory, Popkin notes that
some critics of Pierre Bayle and François de La Mothe le Vayer
not only claim that a Christian can not become a skeptic, but
that the believer must "have both reasons for what he believes
and understanding his faith" (156). Under such a view, faith
must provide reasons even if such reasons and knowledge lead
to evident inconsistencies. This demand might well lead to
irony or even cynicism in knowingly providing inconsistent
reasons for a faith. Popkin observes that these critics
inquire as follows: "How can one accept the Revelation and
doubt the proposition, 'There is a Revelation?' How can one

have a faith without knowing what one believes? These criticisms point out the strangeness of religion based on complete doubt" (156).

This strangeness bears a peculiar resemblance to Poe's intuitive approach to the ideal. As noted in an earlier citation, Poe separates faith from intellectual belief. Not until Kierkegaard or Pascal did the Christian skeptic begin to gain credibility, while La Mothe Le Vayer and Bayle always remained suspected of non-belief. Many Christian theologians regarded skeptics as little better than confidence men. Yet, Popkin notes, "there is practically nothing that is said by Kierkegaard or Pascal that is not also said by La Mothe Le Vayer or Bayle" (156). The standards for judging the sincere and the insincere may always mislead in the absence of any demonstratably genuine faith: "Only God could possibly see inside to know whether a theological sceptic was sincere in his religious belief" ("Theological and Religious Scepticism" 157). This lack of any genuine sign for sincerity or faith throws honesty and belief into question. The inability to discern the belief in the hearts and minds of religious skeptics creates an apparent loss of certainly in evaluations: "Theological scepticism turns out to be a two way street, on which it is never possible to be sure which way the theological sceptic is moving--towards religious scepticism or religious belief" (ibid).

Although the problem haunts Puritan writings through their attempts to distinguish the "true" signs of salvation, Karen Halttunen in <u>Confidence Men and Painted Ladies</u> looks at the social dimensions of separating sincerity and honesty from the insincerity and dishonesty as they affected the middle class of Poe's era. The effects of this seeming duplicity even insinuated itself into the practices of mourning: "Any confidence man or woman, it was feared, could easily assume the proper mourning dress and etiquette, stage a deceptive performance of deep grief, and thus establish a false claim to genteel social status" (125). The dilemmas of hoaxes, diddling, and the inappropriate fascinated Poe enough to write several stories circulating around these topics. In the absence of any absolute criteria, the wavering senses of the cultural and social proper helped Poe question the confidences and convictions holding in place the boundaries of commitment, deception, property, crime, and sanity. Dealing with the genuine and counterfeit lacking any admitted original, the already cited passage underscores a critical distrust in distinguishing faith from the intellectual demonstrations of belief. Because nothing seems absolutely certain, the differences between having and not having any appearance or value can become suspect.

In a review of "The Critical and Miscellaneous Writings of Henry Lord Brougham," Poe indicates whom he regards as profound intellects:

> The Broughams of the human intellect are never its
> Newtons or its Bayles. Yet the contemporaneous
> reputation to be acquired by the former is naturally
> greater than any which the latter may attain. The
> versatility of one whom we see and hear is a more
> dazzling and readily appreciable merit than his
> profundity; which latter is best estimated in the silence
> of the closet, and after the quiet lapse of years. (XI
> 99)

Both Newton and Bayle also interest Popkin. His article on

"Skepticism" in <u>The Encyclopedia of Philosophy</u> notes that

Pierre Bayle "summed up the seventeenth-century intellectual

situation in his monumental <u>Dictionnaire historique et</u>

<u>critique</u> . . . in which he opposed 'everything that is said

and everything that is done'" and "sought to show that most

theories 'are big with contradiction and absurdity' and that

man's efforts to comprehend the world in rational terms always

end in perplexities, bewilderment, and insoluble

difficulties." Bayle's fideistic concerns with theology lead

"him to proclaim that skepticism helped clear the way for the

acceptance of Divinity on the basis of faith alone" (7&8 454).

In part, Popkin situates Newton's response to skepticism

within the circle around the Royal Society: "Newton was part

of the third force insofar as he accepted part of [Henry]

More's metaphysics and searched for some kind of certitude in

the interpretation of biblical prophecies" (<u>The Third Force</u>

115). Many of Newton's often rejected and unpublished

manuscripts deal with close and detailed attempts to read the

Bible, especially the cryptic <u>Daniel</u> and <u>Revelations</u> for their

prophecies. Bayle seems to reflect Poe's tendencies toward the skeptical side and Newton his fideistic side.

The third force influences Leibniz through Anne Conway, whose associates included Henry More, Joseph Glanville, and some additional Cambridge Platonists. Mercurius van Helmont, Conway's companion and doctor, gave Leibniz a copy of her The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy (1692), which demonstrates that the materialisms of "Descartes, Hobbes, and Spinoza could not account for activity or productive causality" (Popkin 116). Popkin explains that her monistic vitalism equates body and spirit: "Body is condensed spirit, and spirit subtle volatile body. But both are the same substance that is alive and active" (117). In her animistic system, an infinitely perfect Spirit, the deity, directs levels of graded spirits or sentiences. Explaining the difference between his and Locke's views in a letter to Thomas Burnet, Leibniz writes that "Mine in philosophy approach much more closely those of the late Lady Conway" (117).

Generally, the supposedly independent and parallel developer of calculus with Newton receives favorable mention in Poe. In a thinly veiled depiction of the orality of concepts and Pierre Bayle, the narrator of "Bon-Bon" distinguishes Leibniz from Pierre Bon-Bon, the famed cook and connoisseur of ideas who equally relishes fine food and philosophers, by claiming that the latter did not waste

precious hours "in frivolous attempts at reconciling the obstinate oils and waters of ethical discussions" (II 126). Poe faults Leibniz for not speculating on the principle of gravity and for not attempting to amend "the common explanation of the difference in the sun's apparent size" (XVI 25 & 224).

Of monumental importance, Poe also faults Leibniz and Locke for many errors arising from their misapprehension of the faculty of memory that, Poe claims, "is neither primitive nor independent," but "exists in conjunction with each primitive faculty, and inseparable from it" (IX 65). Emerging through the heterogeneous sensitivities of both matter and spirit, Poe's notion of memory enters into every psychological faculty, physiognomy, physiology, and physics to allow them the propensities and sentiments of feeling as well as the intellectual possibilities of sensing, reflecting, and knowing. Apparently for Poe, as a power or force accompanying collocated arrangement or embodied matter, the factor of memory, whether tending toward concentration, diffusion, or oscillating between them, inheres in any construction or structural fabrication. This conjunction of matter and spirit makes memory an inherent suspension between cause and effect.

Against an overtly confused metaphysics of some German prosodies, Poe defends Leibniz's notion of sufficient reason, which Leibniz in a manuscript separates from necessity: "the principle of contradiction is the principle of necessity, and

the principle that a sufficient reason must be given is the principle of contingency" (Leibniz 95). Poe remains, however, pleasingly perplexed at Leibniz's conjectures; in Marginalia he observes "[t]hat Leibnitz, who was fond of interweaving even his mathematical, with ethical speculations, [makes] a medley rather to be wondered at than understood" (XVI 25).

Drawing upon geometrical, mathematical, and scientific notions of demonstration and evidence, Poe uses the design in the data to suggest ideal principles, but he remains acutely aware of the problems such evidence presents to skepticism.

Poe's Dilemma of Doubtful Faith

Several passages will illustrate two problems as Poe attempts to approach them. The first, from Eureka, deals with the endeavor to situate a principle, "attraction" as he terms it, behind the evidence of gravity. The second, from Marginalia, tries to situate principles in prosody.

Poe marks a limit in conceptual thinking again by having recourse to the notion of infinity:

> The fact is, that, upon the enunciation of any one of the class of terms to which "Infinity" belongs--the class representing thoughts of thought--he who has a right to say that he thinks at all, feels himself called upon, not to entertain a conception, but simply to direct his mental vision toward some given point, in the intellectual firmament, where lies a nebula never to be resolved. To solve it, indeed, he makes no effort; for with a rapid instinct he comprehends, not only the impossibility, but, as regards all human purposes, the inessentiality, of its resolution. He perceives that the Deity has not designed it to be solved. He sees, at once, that it lies out of the brain of man, and even how, if not exactly why, it lies out of it. There are people,

> I am aware, who, busying themselves in attempts at the unattainable, acquire very easily, by dint of the jargon they emit, among those thinkers-that-they-think with whom darkness and depth are synonymous, a kind of cuttle-fish reputation for profundity; but the finest quality of Thought is its self-cognizance; and, with some little equivocation, it may be said that no fog of the mind can well be greater than that which, extending to the very boundaries of the mental domain, shuts out even these boundaries themselves from comprehension. (XVI 203-4)

This nebulous boundary for comprehension extends in every direction and limits human endeavors. According to Poe, the resolution of these concepts remains impossible and for human purposes inessential, but still the effort goes on among cuttle-fish to penetrate the impenetrable fog. Many of Poe's narrators try to attain the unattainable; some even believe they have attained the deep and dark nebula. Not only does the incomprehensible deity and his design remain nebulous, but the finest of self-cognizance also extends into this unresolvable and unattainable fog. Although man may see how the design lies out of the brain of man, as always the possibility for any ultimate conception remains lost. This "human condition" marks all sensual, rational, and inspired endeavors for certainty with such terms.

This understanding marks the development of the argument in Eureka. After reviewing "proof after proof" for gravity, Poe separates the ideas of unity and diffusion by appealing to the idea of irradiation. He arrives at what he terms the laws of irradiation, which he alleges belong to the "indisputable geometrical properties" of the sphere. He dismisses the

questions that address the problems of proof and demonstration:

> We say of them, "they are true--they are evident." To demand _why_ they are true, would be to demand why the axioms are true upon which their demonstration is based. _Nothing_ is demonstrable, strictly speaking; but _if_ anything _be_, then the properties--the laws in question are demonstrated. (XVI 225)

Although Poe claims that such indisputable properties establish geometry, in fact geometry has extended its resolution by questioning those very axioms and properties. While this increased resolution solves nothing, it does seem to extend the apparent range of understanding. Still admitting the circularity of his claim of truth and evidence, he acknowledges his loss in the face of the skeptical demand that nothing remains strictly demonstrable. Poe's argument in _Eureka_ depends on this assumption of geometry as the deity's design.

Although faulting the skeptical Pascal for conflating the universe of stars with the universe proper, the narrator accepts the geometrical model drawn from his _Pensées_ to claim that "the interminable succession of stars" found on all sides

> was the untenable idea of Pascal when making perhaps the most successful attempt ever made, at paraphrasing the conception for which we struggle in the word "Universe." "It is a sphere," he says, "of which the center is everywhere, the circumference, nowhere." But although this intended definition is, in fact, _no_ definition of the Universe of _stars_, we may accept it, with some mental reservation, as a definition (rigorous enough for all practical purposes) of the Universe _proper_--that is to say, of the Universe of _space_. This latter, then, let us regard as "_a sphere of which the center is everywhere, the circumference nowhere_." In fact, while we find it impossible to fancy an _end_ to space, we have no

> difficulty in picturing to ourselves any one of an
> infinity of <u>beginnings</u>.
> As our starting point, then, let us adopt the
> <u>Godhead</u>. Of this Godhead, <u>in itself</u>, he alone is not
> imbecile--he alone is not impious who propounds----
> nothing. (XVI 204-5)

Using Pascal's geometrical model for the universe proper, Poe

suggests that while everywhere becomes the center, the absence

of nowhere limits sensibly and conceptually the boundary of

the spherical surface. Poe apparently has reservations about

this model. Perhaps keeping the everywhere and the nowhere

apart bothered him as his interest in the hollow earth theory

and the shadowy boundaries between life and death might

suggest. Thus, of the infinitely conceivable beginnings of

the proper, the belief in the geometrical basis of the godhead

as a possible origin should lead its proponents to propose

nothing. From this perspective of uncertainty about god, the

narrator cites the Baron de Bielfeld's "'We know absolutely

<u>nothing</u> of the nature or essence of God:--in order to

comprehend what he is, we should have to be God ourselves!'"

(qtd in XVI 205). Stimulated by this last notion, the

narrator hastens into a metaphysical and theological

exclamation:

> "<u>We should have to be God ourselves!</u>"--With a phrase so
> startling as this yet ringing in my ears, I nevertheless
> venture to demand if this our present ignorance of the
> Deity is an ignorance to which the soul is <u>everlastingly</u>
> condemned. (XVI 205)

While the point of the center of a sphere functions only

theoretically, Poe seems to converse the impossible by

entertaining the geometric fancy that nothing creates

everything. Many attributes attach to this god that again, later, appears as ourselves: Him, Deity, Spirit, the Heart Divine, his Volition, Incomprehensible, and not Matter. It seems that our everywhere and nowhere remain God's everywhere and nowhere.

The leap from geometric speculation to metaphysical assumption requires some additional steps before arriving at any "indisputable principles." Poe proceeds to supply them with an appeal to shadowy convictions of intuition:

> We have attained a point where only Intuition can aid us:--but now let me recur to the idea which I have already suggested as that alone which we can properly entertain of intuition. It is but the conviction arising from those inductions or deductions of which the processes are so shadowy as to escape our consciousness, elude our reason, or defy our capacity of expression. With this understanding, I now assert--that an intuition altogether irresistible, although inexpressible, forces me to the conclusion that what God originally created-- that that Matter which, by dint of his Volition, he first made from his Spirit, or from Nihility, could have been nothing but Matter in its utmost conceivable state of----what?--of Simplicity? (XVI 206)

Admittedly unreasonable, unconscious, and unexpressible, Poe's intuition convinces him that nonsensible shadows of shadows haunt the ebbs and flows, the appearances and disappearances, of the principles of repulsion and attraction, of the sensations of electricity and gravity, and of the reasons of induction and deductions. Irresistibly and inexpressibly, suspended, the everything comes out of nothing and blends with nothing. Thus, Poe alleges that whether imaginatively followed forward or backward in space or time, intuitive processes of simplicity sufficiently and efficiently force

nothing but matter. The foggy nebula remains unattained and incomprehensible.

Poe next defends the circularity, or rather sphericality, of this assertion:

> This will be found to be the sole absolute <u>assumption</u> of my Discourse. I use the word "assumption" in its ordinary sense; yet I maintain, that even this my primary proposition, is very, very far indeed, from being really a mere assumption. Nothing was ever more certain--no human conclusion was ever, in fact, more regularly--more rigorously <u>de</u>duced:--but, alas! the processes lie out of the human analysis--at all events are beyond the utterance of the human tongue. (XVI 206)

The processes and the certainty of nothing stretch conceivability, utterance, and consciousness to the limit, and somewhere past that conclusive limit, nothing apparently becomes everything. By following the simplicity of sensation, reason, and revelation of principle, Poe arrives at the unutterable processes which, he intuitively assumes and claims, "lie out of the human analysis." Having tracked demonstrations and arguments down to unfinished regressions, circularities, and hypotheses, at the contextual limits to perception and conception Poe faithfully makes an intuitive assumption or guess that enfolds his heart and soul. Applying the term mystical fideism to this faith in an unknowable constancy seems fitting.

Lost amidst the shadowy indistinctness and irreconcilability, Poe acknowledges the problems of inductive scientific gravitation and deductive geometrical simplicity as proofs for his abortive model of intuitive faith:

> The reverse of our processes has brought us to an identical result; but, while in the one process <u>intuition</u> was the starting-point, in the other it was the goal. In commencing the former journey I could only say that, with an irresistible intuition, I <u>felt</u> Simplicity to have been the characteristic of the original action of God:--in ending the latter I can only declare that, with an irresistible intuition, I perceive Unity to have been the source of the observed phænomena of the Newtonian gravitation. Thus, according to the schools, I <u>prove</u> nothing. So be it:--I design but to suggest--and to <u>convince</u> through the suggestion. . . . For my part, I am not sure that I speak and see--I am not so sure that my heart beats and that my soul lives:--of the rising of tomorrow's sun--a probability that as yet lies in the Future--I do not pretend to be one thousandth part as sure--as I am of the irretrievably by-gone <u>Fact</u> that All Things and All Thoughts of Things, with all their ineffable Multiplicity of Relation, sprang at once into being from the primordial and irrelative <u>One</u>. (XVI 221-22)

Admitting and accepting his loss, he knows that he has proven nothing, hence the title <u>Eureka: A Prose Poem</u>, but at once questioning the surety of sensed effects and affirming their unity and nihility, his poetically intuited design attempts to convince through suggestion, not to prove or demonstrate. No conquering demonstration, proof, relation, or inspired appeal could support such a pointed assumption, such an entertaining intuition, regarding the design of the universe proper. Instead he dreams of turning toward the irretrievably by-gone "fact" of spiritual memory and monumental embodiment.

The next example comes from a section from <u>Marginalia</u>. Following the citation concerning the genuine and the counterfeit, Poe takes Dr. Henry More to task for also begging the admission when More claims in relation to the alchemists' pretense to make gold that, "'If there had not been, at some

time or other, true miracles, it had not been so easy to impose on the people by false'" (quoted in <u>Marginalia</u> XVI 114). Redeploying More's fideistic focus along more material lines, Poe finds the shared human brain as the source for universal belief, rather than true miracles, when he claims that this idea proffered by More

> belongs to that extensive class of argumentation which is
> <u>all point</u>--deriving its whole effect from epigrammatism.
> That the belief in ghosts, or in a Deity, or in a future
> state, or in anything else credible or incredible--that
> any such belief is universal, demonstrates nothing more
> than that which needs no demonstration--the human
> unanimity--the identity of construction in the human
> brain--an identity of which the inevitable result must
> be, upon the whole, similar deductions from similar <u>data</u>.
> (XVI 115)

Based on similar deductions from similar data, the universal belief in ghosts, as in a deity, suggests to Poe an identity or, at least, a similarity in the material construction of human brains. This appeal to the materiality of sensed data as indicating a believable unity of design or effect which lies ultimately past conception might stem from Poe's reflections on his own artistic constructions.

In responding to the question "What is Poetry?" less explicitly, but perhaps more honestly, than in <u>Eureka</u>, Poe heartily and cautiously asserts, "I should have little difficulty, perhaps, in defending a certain apparent dogmatism to which I am prone, on the topic of versification" (XVI 111). Poe admits that "the question is purely metaphysical, and the whole science of metaphysics is at present a chaos, through the impossibility of fixing the meanings of the words which

its very nature compels it to employ" (XVI 111). As a
forerunner of new criticism and close reading, Poe then tries
to sort out the demonstrable data from the principles of
prosody:

> as regards versification, this difficulty is only
> partial; for although one-third of the topic may be
> considered metaphysical, and thus may be mooted at the
> fancy of this individual or of that, still the remaining
> two-thirds belong, undeniably, to mathematics. The
> questions ordinarily discussed with so much gravity in
> regard to rhythm, meter, etc., are susceptible of
> positive adjustment by demonstration. Their laws are
> merely a portion of the Median laws of form and quantity
> --of relation. In respect, then, to any of these
> ordinary questions--these silly moot points which so
> often arise in common criticism--the prosodist would
> speak as weakly in saying "this or that proposition is
> probably so and so, or possibly so and so," as would the
> mathematician in admitting that, in his humble opinion,
> or if he were not greatly mistaken, any two sides of a
> triangle were, altogether, greater than the third side.
> I must add, however, as some palliation of the
> discussions referred to, and of the objections so often
> urged with a sneer, to "particular theories of
> versification binding no one but their inventor"--that
> there is really extant no such work as a Prosody
> Raisonnée. The Prosodies of the schools are merely
> collections of vague laws, with their more vague
> exceptions, based upon no principles whatever, but
> extorted in the most speculative manner from the usages
> of the ancients, who had no laws beyond those of their
> ears and fingers. (XVI 111-12)

Again, Poe appeals to mathematical laws of the Median to help
him discern the textually embodied design from which he
dogmatically and intuitively feels he can base his poetic
principles. In this citation Poe extends his notion of
reasonable mathematical laws to "those immutable principles of
time, quantity, etc.--the mathematics, in short, of music"
(XVI 112). Lacking any authoritative articulation of the
rhythmic laws of poetry or music, Poe in some measure forgives

the resonant and vibratory vagueness surrounding versification. From his mathematically biased assumptions, he also seems not to have appreciated the metaphysical principles of the regularity of "primitive" and ancient poetry. Such an assumed, self-cognizant dogmatism provides the critical Poe with a certain basis for addressing the texts he reviews.

The readers' receptions of his artistic principles greatly concerned Poe despite such confident assurance. His livelihood remained at stake. In <u>Marginalia</u> Poe, ever concerned about aesthetic beliefs, notes a change in the credulity and doubt of his reviewers' receptions:

> Twenty years ago credulity was the characteristic trait of the mob, incredulity the distinctive feature of the philosophic; <u>now</u> the case is conversed. The wise are averse from disbelief. To be sceptical is no longer evidence of information or wit. (XVI 60)

According to this observation, in about 1824 the mob seemed credulous, but by about 1844 it appeared skeptical; whereas, by about 1844, the philosophic had become more credulous. Karen Halttunen's <u>Confidence Men and Painted Women</u> underscores suggestively the sentimental cultural crisis between sincerity and dissimulation during this era. This reversal occurs during Poe's writing career and would have created an uncertainty as to the readers' receptions of various narrative presentations. An author might anticipate both credulous and doubting readings. For a mass-circulation magazine audience, Poe especially feels he would have to consider his skeptical readers and appeal to them too. As an observation the passage

does not commit Poe to any side of the traits, but seems concerned about aesthetic receptions.

Such ideal principles and skeptical concerns situate Poe's art. They reveal Poe grappling with the skeptical limits of an unresolvable materiality and admitting to the losses of certainty with his spiritual ideal. These attempts place him in the tradition of modern skeptics. Contrasting the tranquil equipollence or epochē of classical skepticism and the anguished quests for security of modern skeptics forced to rely upon themselves and their feelings, Popkin suggests that living in the shadows of the excessively ordered medieval world, modern skeptics seek for what assurances of order remain: "The modern sceptic has been in the forefront of delineating what this entails, and in so doing has sought for some naturalistically explicable values, or some kind of blind faith. Neither option has bred the calm tranquility of ancient scepticism" (The Third Force 245). The narrator of Eureka claims to have a faith in deity or god, but he also recognizes that this faith remains incomprehensible, an attempt at an impossible conception. Poe's works reflect the unsettling effects on claims for certainty that take place where no original genuine appears to determine a counterfeit. Despite his passionate attempts at confidence, he recognizes the unfounded circularities, the assumed hypotheses, and the never-ending recessions that suspend and haunt his memorable intuitions. Instead of repressing, denying, or avoiding these

dilemmas of apparent loss, the texts accept the difficulties of the loss of certainty and proceed to deal with their dilemmas intuitively and aesthetically. Although his works incorporate an intuitively fideistic attempt to formulate an ideal, often rationalized by appeals to geometry, mathematics, and science, Poe introjects a skeptical critique into his proposed values through his attention to negation, the inconceivable, and the impossible. Moving toward both doubt and faith, this doubled approach suspends the reader's certainty about how to read Poe's artistic tales.

Literary Critics on Poe's Skepticism

Several contemporary literary critics have discussed the sceptical aspects in Poe's works. G. R. Thompson sketches out some of their ontological and cosmological implications, Joan Dayan looks at some their epistemological complexities, and Stanley Cavell engages some of their moral concerns. These studies explicitly touch on modern-day concerns about skepticism and help prepare the way for my readings of Poe's skepticism.

G. R. Thompson most clearly develops his notion of Poe's melancholy skepticism in "Unity, Death, and Nothingness--Poe's 'Romantic Skepticism.'" Thompson bases his argument for Poe's skepticism on the symmetrical development of the universe from an important passage from Eureka:

> The birth, death, and resurrection of the Universe as stated in Eureka has a further (esthetic) twist ignored

by Poe's readers. The specific "design" that Poe sees is a melancholy symmetry of Nothingness. According to Poe, the present material Universe is an expression of God's original "Nihility." When God's present expansiveness concentrates again into primal "Unity," the Universe will "sink at once into that Nothingness which, to all Finite Perception, Unity must be--into that Material Nihility" from which it was evoked (XVI, 310-311). What will then remain will be God in his original state: Nothingness. (299)

Thompson asserts that the moral and esthetic inferences of this "big bang"-like vision, based on Poe's notions of attraction and repulsion, lie implicit in his fascination with death. Finding an aesthetic design in a "cycle of Nothingness," Thompson traces explicitly the ontological basis of Poe's cosmology: "The origin of the Universe lies in Nothingness, its present material state is but a variation of the original Nothingness, and its final end is a reconstitution of the original Nothingness" (299). Noting a play of tensions engendered in part by this tendency toward nothingness in Poe's works, Thompson claims,

Basically, Eureka presents what is to be found in all of Poe's creative [and I might add personal and critical] works: a tension between the creative and the destructive impulses of the Universe as perceived (and misperceived) by the questing "philosophical lynxeye" (XVI, 161). And the ambiguities, the parody, the melancholy, the humor of Eureka [and I contend in additional works also] are all part of a skeptical entertaining of ideas about the nature of the Universe and about the methods of attaining knowledge. The tension between the sense of the creative and the sense of the destructive in Eureka and in Poe's other works results in what, I believe, cannot be called other than "skepticism." Although assuredly "Romantic" in the quest for esthetic consistency and design, Eureka presents a "skepticism" that results from the appalling possibility that the essence of the Universe is neither creative nor destructive in any design--but simply Void. Or to use the recurrent word of Eureka--Nothingness. (298)

As Thompson notes, the critics have ignored this esthetic design of the tension between the creative and the destructive, between the ideal and loss: "These remarks have never been emphasized by critics of Poe's thought, with the result that the implicit melancholy skepticism of the essay has never been seriously considered" (298). G. R. Thompson's rather undeveloped notion of linking melancholy and skepticism seems appropriate for a better appreciation of Poe's life and work.

Joan Dayan's Fables of Mind: An Inquiry into Poe's Fiction notes several affinities between Poe and skeptics, such as Pyrrho and David Hume. She alleges that Poe's skeptical inconsistency serves as a critique of certainty, consistency, and immutability. Agreeing with some of the consequences of her argument, I do not agree with her evaluation of the dangerous and corrosive role of skepticism and want to look more closely at the psychodynamics of Poe's skepticism than she does. Dayan claims that

> Perplexity, the sudden recognition of danger in a comfortably circumscribed (or humanistic) world, and the corrosion of any superlative mode were exactly what Poe wanted his fiction to induce. Like Hume's presentation of the consistent Pyrrhonist, Poe's inconsistent style reveals the Pyrrhonist in his two moods--alternatively as "philosophical dogmatist" and as "skeptic." (8)

She attributes misreadings of Poe's work to his ability to mimic too well that which he complains about. She claims Poe purposefully stretches the conventional notions of the imaginable or conceivable. In citing from Eureka the only

named mention in Poe's works to David Hume, Dayan touches on
the problems of the referentiality of language to assert that
a parallelism functions between Hume's claim that "'Whatever
_is_ may _not be_'" (which she somehow implies verbally justifies
"[a]nything is conceivable") and Poe's desire "to deny the
undeniable, to prove the mutable basis for all we hold
immutable": "'If ability to conceive be taken as a criterion
of Truth, then a truth to _David_ Hume would very seldom be a
truth to _Joe_; and ninety-nine hundredths of what is undeniable
in Heaven would be demonstrable falsity upon Earth ([Harrison
XVI] 193)'" (Dayan 32). In this context from _Eureka_ dealing
with John Mills, who gets misnamed Miller or Mill, Poe
considers the claim that the "'Ability or inability to
conceive,' says Mr. Mill very properly, 'is _in no case_ to be
received as a criterion of axiomatic truth'" (XVI 193).

Although unwilling to assign it an axiomatic status, "I
will not grant it to be an _axiom_; and this merely because I am
showing that _no_ axioms exist" (XVI 193), Poe agrees to sustain
the proposition because "_Not_ to admit the proposition, is to
insinuate a charge of variability in Truth itself, whose very
title is a synonym of the Steadfast" (XVI 193). Thus Poe
seems willing to admit that truth itself remains invariable
and steadfast in some sense. Going a step further, however,
Poe assumes that,

> _if_ an axiom _there be_, then the proposition of which we
> speak has the fullest right to be considered an axiom--
> that no _more_ absolute axiom _is_--and, consequently, that
> any subsequent proposition which shall conflict with this

one primarily advanced, must be either a falsity in itself--that is to say no axiom--or, if admitted axiomatic, must at once neutralize both itself and its predecessor. (XVI 193)

The conditional logic of "being" ("_if_ . . . _there be_ and _is_") in which a proposition that approaches this worthy conceivability/inconceivability also approaches the absolute, superlative mode and that by conflicting with this conceivability/inconceivability becomes either false or neutrally suspended seems rather fascinating in that it marks out a considered limit to an approach to truth.

However, Dayan uses this position to elaborate on Poe's belief "that because we cannot conceive something ('we find it _impossible to conceive_ that a tree can be anything else than a tree or not a tree' [which would violate the principle of noncontradiction]), this does not mean that it cannot be" (32), which merely claims that there remain inconceivable things. According to Dayan, this position attributed to Poe allegedly results in an assault on the traditionally accepted notions of logic, conflicting its principles of noncontradiction with interminable discrepancies. Rendering the axiomatic principle mutable, this approach to the variable obviousnesses of logics and unsteadfast "truths" receives more justification from Poe's texts than developed here (for example, see XVI 240-41).

Dayan follows this observation up with a skeptical explanation in part of Poe's contempt for the influence of the "'_sentiment_ of the vulgar idea' ([Harrison XVI] 217)" on

philosophy by an appeal to the natural and the unnatural. She claims:

> the vulgar (or natural) version that Poe opposes to his philosophical (or unnatural) can also be explained through Hume's rigorous separation of reason from nature. Reason carried to an extreme can perplex with contradictions, resulting in that skepticism that confounds all assumptions; but in this dangerous state of corrosive questioning, nature comes to the rescue. (72)

Dayan believes that Poe's technique in Eureka stems from his desire "to denature our most natural propensities, in order to teach us what it would be like were we to stretch our thought to its most uncomfortable limit" (73), but paradoxically this technique makes "Poe's 'consistent' . . . convertible with what is inconsistent" (78).

From the extremes of this "poetic inconsistency" in criticizing Tennyson's poetry in "The Drama of Exile," Poe asserts, not only as Dayan cites, that "the greatest error and the greatest truth are scarcely two points in a circle," but also he affirms that this extreme in Tennyson wrought "a natural and inevitable revulsion, leading him first to contemn and secondly to investigate his earlier manner, and, finally, to winnow from its magnificent elements the truest and purest of all poetical styles" (XII 33-34). While Dayan argues that such skepticism might lead to corrosion and inconsistency, according to Poe, it can also lead to true and pure poetry. By sifting through the chaff and grain of the mournful and doubtful losses that lead to "poetic inconsistency," the sensitive, aspiring artist can get better at fabricating works

that incorporate more fancy and imagination. This accounts for Poe's observation that "originality . . . demands in its attainment less of invention than negation" (XIV 203). Thus, a more resolved appreciation of losses may lead to better art.

In addition to this seeming convertibility between error and truth, consistency and inconsistency, Dayan also notes "Poe's equation between a style of decoration [in "The Philosophy of Furniture" and elsewhere] and a structure of discourse" (99). In treating the reciprocity of thought and extension of matter, she illustrates her notion of the convertibility between the animate and inanimate by claiming that "The 'essence' of carpet, bedroom, or lamp, like the 'thought of nature,' suggests that Poe not only exercises a blurring of impressions and thought, idea and image (a manipulation Hume would have appreciated), but also intends to say something about a textual domain where matter thinks and mind matters" (100). Such a questioning of the mind/matter distinctions has long appeared as a theme in skeptical literature. While discussing simple impressions and ideas in The Treatise of Human Nature, Hume does claim that "[t]he one seems to be in manner the reflection of the other; so that all the perceptions of the mind are double, and appear both as impressions and ideas" (10-11). The philosopher also notes cautiously that "tho' there is in general a great resemblance betwixt our complex impressions and ideas, yet the rule is not universally true, that they are exact copies of each other"

(11). While no exact equation functions between impressions
and ideas, perceptions and conceptions, Poe's approach does
have an unsettling effect between the two notions. Validly,
Dayan asserts that "[m]atter and no matter no longer take
their places in a hierarchy, but act and react equally with
each other in the elastic and repercussive medium that is
Poe's at its most exacting" (100).

In reviewing "Eleonora," Dayan touches similarly on a
second purpose for Poe's skepticism. This concern with
identity becomes important to my argument. Hume's notion of
personal identity as discovered by memory underlies much of
the argument. In <u>The Treatise of Human Understanding</u> Hume
claims:

> As memory alone acquaints us with the continuance and
> extent of this succession of perceptions, 'tis to be
> consider'd, upon that account chiefly, as the source of
> personal identity. Had we no memory, we never shou'd
> have any notion of causation, nor consequently of that
> chain of causes and effects, which constitute our self or
> person. But having once acquir'd this notion of
> causation from the memory, we can extend the same chain
> of causes, and consequently the identity of our persons
> beyond our memory, and can comprehend times, and
> circumstances, and actions, which we have entirely
> forgot, but suppose in general to have existed. (90)

Dayan recognizes this connection between Poe and Hume when she
claims: "Memory--preserving a continuous thought through time
--constitutes personal identity" (219). Hume recognizes some
of the problems of maintaining a consistent and coherent
constancy invariably the same for the notion of a self. As
such, the roles of the memorial and memory will become
significant in my argument. After considering the

contradictory and the reflective or double sense of existence
(see the citation of Hume quoted above in relation to simple
impressions and ideas) giving rise to Poe's sense of memory
and self, Dayan affirms precisely that "Poe's destruction of
temporal sequence. . . . makes it impossible to distinguish
between memory or imagination" (219). In her focus on time,
she asserts that Poe constructs his riddle concerning memory
and imagination with Hume's meditations in mind:

> Hume characterized the move from memory to imagination as
> a degeneration from the most vivid faculty to the
> dullest, from a lively impression to a less lively idea.
> But his tracing of the difference between "an idea of the
> memory" and "an idea of the imagination" involves him in
> further uncertainty; and he is quick to emphasize that
> "memory, by losing its force and vivacity, may degenerate
> to such a degree, as to be taken for an idea of the
> imagination"; and conversely, "an idea of the imagination
> may acquire such a force and vivacity, as to pass for an
> idea of the memory, and counterfeit its effects on the
> belief and judgment." (219)

This observation opens onto some of Hume's difficulties in
separating and valuing the natural from the impressions and
ideas of the natural. While Dayan sees that "This collision
of empirical psychology and cosmic fiction amounts to nothing
less than Poe's comprehension of narrative technique in
philosophic method" (219), the possibility of an overlap
between imagination and memory also has the effect of making
"identity [become] the source of our greatest fiction" (219-
220). She further argues, accurately enough, that "Poe takes
the idea of identity as a fiction and composes fiction out of
this idea" (220).[1] The two purposes for which Poe uses

skeptical notions have an almost post-modern impact on his epistemology.

Stanley Cavell in his <u>In Quest of the Ordinary: Lines of Skepticism and Romanticism</u> considers some moral implications of Poe's skepticism. Cavell finds three ways to read "The Imp of the Perverse" as a critique of "the pure arrogance of reason" through Poe's attempt to argue psychologically for perversity as a basic sentiment of the soul or faculty. First, Cavell claims that "both the fiction of the writer's arresting himself and wearing fetters and tenanting the cell of the condemned and the fiction of providing a poisoned wax light for reading are descriptions or fantasies of writing, modeled by the writing before us" (123). This approach to architectonics collapses the props and settings of the tale with the structure of the tale itself. Second, as a sort of perversion of Descartes' <u>cogito</u>, Cavell sees the fiction of unremarkable words as, when said, annihilating the sayer or thinking as precipitating a destruction onto the thinker. Third, looking at the many words with "imp" in them, Cavell extends the fact of "the possession of language as the subjection of oneself to the intelligible" (124): "Now if to speak of the imp of the perverse is to name the imp in English [Cavell mentions impulse, impels, impatient, important, impertinent, imperial, import, imprimatur, impossible, unimpressive, and imprisoned in "The Imp of the Perverse"], namely as the initial sounds of a number of characteristically

Poe-ish terms, then to speak of something called the perverse as containing the imp is to speak of language itself, specifically English, as the perverse" (124).

These ways to read the tale lead him to claim that "There is--as in saying 'I am safe,' which destroys safety and defeats what is said--a question whether in speaking one is affirming something or negating it" (125). In playing with the expression "penning himself," Cavell creates a virtual inquisition of questions:

> Is this release or incarceration? He enforces the question by going on to say that he will not expound-- that is, will not remove something (presumably himself) from a pound, or pen. But this may mean that he awaits expounding by the reader. Would this be shifting the burden of his existence onto some other? And who might we be to bear such a burden? Mustn't we also seek to shift it? Granted that we need one another's acknowledgment, isn't there in this very necessity a mutual victimization, one that our powers of mutual redemption cannot overcome? Is this undecidable? Or is deciding this question exactly as urgent as deciding to exist? (126)

This questioning about the shifting of the burden of responsibility seems to open onto what Cavell takes as a difference between Poe's skepticism and his own in regard to victimization. Some of the details of this difference get spelled out in a postscript entitled "Poe's Perversity and the Imp(ulse) of Skepticism" attached to the end of his chapter.

Before turning to Cavell's postscript, I wish to digress to the moral stakes in this difference by turning to David Hirsch's "The Pit and the Apocalypse." In this reading of Poe's "The Pit and the Pendulum," Hirsch looks briefly at some

of the existential and biblical consequences by contrasting them to the concerns of Kierkegaard's "sickness unto death," Kafka's guilt and responsibility, and Camus' vision of the absurd. Hirsch sees the tale's tortured narrator as "condemned, like every man" by that "[a]uthority, divine or human, [which] is indifferent to suffering, both temporal and eternal" (639). Wanting only to survive in the face of torture, Poe's narrator "does not seek to be exonerated, to have his reputation cleared. He desires only to be free. Yet he realizes at the same time that freedom is not possible in the face of death" (641). Noting that for "Descartes' 'I think, therefore I am,' Poe substitutes 'I think, therefore I suffer'" (644) and that in Poe's tales the hoax and irony border on the parodic, Hirsch claims hopefully that "if Poe opens an absurd abyss between thinking and Being, he also suggests that the gap may be closed" (644). Hirsch believes that the apocalyptic biblical imagery associated with the prisoner's absurd rescue from the pit by the arm of General Lasalle accomplishes this faithful closure. While enclosed in the human situation, deliverance remains ultimately a matter of chance, although some material suffering seems avoidable. The critic then generalizes to the heart of the concern:

> But the salvation is meaningful precisely because it is absurd, an absurd leap into transcendence, coming after his absurd "deliverance" from the pendulum, possible only because Existence itself, stripped down to absolute negation, has become absurd. It is difficult to see the narrator's salvation, embedded in a nest of apocalyptic images, in any other way. Knowing Poe's love of hoaxes, one draws so positive a conclusion hesitantly.

> Nevertheless, in this story, the possibility of hoax
> seems minimized because there is not a deliberate
> affirmation of transcendence, which enters, as it were,
> only through the back door. Poe's demonism, his famed
> imp of the perverse, seems to operate in reverse here to
> destroy the will to self-destruction. Poe seems to have
> started as one of the Devil's party, intending to write
> a story of blackness and despair, of alienation and
> disintegration, of the forces of meaningless, irrational
> destruction, and of the injustice and malignity of a
> Divine Creator. He may even have intended to use the
> allusions to Revelation parodically. But somewhere along
> the line the dialectic spirit of the Biblical apocalyptic
> becomes operative in the story and the transcendence
> downward resolves into a transcendence upward. (650-51)

While such a reading remains problematic because of Poe's

confident hoaxicality and parody, the absurdity of the

perverse move from the prisoner's torture to a "transcendent"

rescue marks the stakes wagered around the conflict between

the "constraints" of skepticism and the "freedom" of a

transcendent ideality. Drawing parallels to Kierkegaard,

Hirsch concludes that "the quintessence of terror is not man's

fear of death; it is the dread ensuing from a confrontation

with the possibility of his own immortality" (652).

Similarly, the ethical horror in Poe's work might stem not

from any end for human painful sufferances and tortured

victimizations, but from the possibility that they have no

end.

Cavell attempts to separate himself from the skeptical

violence he attributes to Poe by tentatively and aloofly

emphasizing a difference which he draws from Freud:

> I might describe the attitude I find myself resisting,
> the posture I would alter toward the events of horror in
> Poe's stories, as one in which the narrator is "acting-
> out" a fantasy or an unconscious impulse, as opposed (as

> Freud does typically oppose "acting-out," thus partially
> defining it) to remembering something, an opposite way of
> bringing the past into the present, a way that brings the
> promise of a freedom from the violence and the
> alienatedness of the impulsion to repeat. (140)

How well acting-out separates from remembering under, as Dayan puts it, "Poe's destruction of temporal sequence" remains questionable. Separating the violences of the impulsions toward freedom from those of the promises of a loyal fidelity seem similarly difficult. Indeed, as already seen in Freud's approach to the unconscious memory, the analyst acts out his own violent fantasy of normative positivism by making memory ineradicably permanent, beyond mourning. With an undecidability between memory and imagination, a promised freedom may become as violently engaging and estranging as an impulse to repeat. Through embodiment and reflection, characters impose choices decisively on themselves and those around them.

If under the speculative construction of a present that depends wholly upon a reading of a past and a future, the notion of a privilege assignable to the imagined or fancied present should give way, then no one, not even Cavell, could express surprise. Furthermore in particular contexts, the systematic separation between the "outwardness" of acting-out and the "inwardness" of remembering may undergo similarly strange slippages. At any rate, assuming a notion of identity or self that Poe found suspended and haunted, Cavell works to assign ethical and moral responsibility:

> For Poe we are responsible metaphysically for our errors
> exactly because we are not morally responsible for them.
> I am the one who cannot refrain. Some moralists are of
> the view that when I do what I am impelled to do, the
> action is not exactly mine. Poe's view seems to be that
> in such a case the responsibility is never discharged--it
> sticks to me forever. Of course not all actions are of
> such a kind but only ones that show what I have been
> calling the inhuman in the human, the monstrousness of
> it, ones that, I would like to say, come before and after
> morality. . . . The implication is that morality is
> stumped at certain points in judging human nature, a fact
> that should illuminate both those points "before" and
> "after" morality. If there is a target of satire here,
> it is those who say they believe in determinism, who do
> not appreciate how free we are (capable of things it is
> hard to imagine) and how far from free we are (incapable
> of resisting this imagination). (142)

While this develops the moral implications of an attempt to

demark the kinds of inhuman and the human in an ethical realm,

appealing to a proper sanity or wellness, Cavell quickly

admits that "[t]he desire to be well is preceded by the desire

to be" (144). Yet Poe's texts have rigorously (some have in

exasperation claimed obsessively) questioned the very

foundations of identity, the very desire for endurance and

survival.

Cavell wishes to distinguish between that skepticism that

would serve to establish as opposed to that which would reject

the world. Cavell's distinction revolves around Poe's

wanting, as Dayan, put it "to deny the undeniable" (32):

> What I am calling Poe's perverse account of skepticism
> does, I think, capture an essential perverseness in
> skepticism, at once granting an insight into skepticism
> and enacting a parody of it. The insight is that
> skepticism, the thing I mean by skepticism, is, or
> becomes, necessarily paradoxical, the apparent denial of
> what is for all the world undeniable. I take skepticism
> not as the moral of a cautionary science laboring to
> bring light to a superstitious, fanatical world, but as

> the recoil of a demonic reason, irrationally thinking to
> dominate the earth. I take it to begin as a wish not to
> reject the world but rather to establish it. The parody
> is to deny this, to conceal the longing for assurance
> under an allegedly more original wish for self-vexation.
> (138)

Obstinately, the haunting question of who denies or conceals what from whom does not go away; the world lies at stake. While, as we have seen, Poe assumes and affirms his world of haunting suspension, Dayan and Cavell resist his vision from positions that seem to accept normative noncontradiction and wellness as somehow more self-evident.   Many of their arguments attempt to resist moving toward an uncertainty that in turn tends toward the self-refutation arguments that surround skepticism (see the introduction's endnote 5), but these arguments also suggest that the world in order to gain the hope for establishing communities and relations less dominated by demonic reasons should expand the sensible awarenesses of whatever might constitute the oppressions that seem to hold in place "the undeniable." More than a simple deflation of the affirmed, the labor of increasing the critical awarenesses of this commonly accepted undeniability will begin only by denying its undeniability. It also appears that the parody associated with this longing for assurance connects to something like trust and its frustrations, rather than an original perversity only.

Bailey's Suggested Therapy

Finally, before I turn toward Poe's treatment of memory
in the three tales, Bailey's article "Pyrrhonean Scepticism
and the Self-refutation Argument" deserves some attention
because it serves as a clear articulation of the rational
self-refutation argument and some of its possible solutions
and consequences. I contend that Poe's texts operate from a
position accepting the five skeptical tropes and that Bailey
attributes to the "mature" skeptic. Bailey explains at the
beginning of his essay:

> The self-refutation argument takes the form of a dilemma.
> The global sceptic about rational justification is
> engaged in attacking our customary view that some beliefs
> and actions can be rationally justified. Let us suppose,
> then, that this attack is launched by way of overtly non-
> rational considerations. These would rightly be
> dismissed by everyone concerned to live a rational life.
> But the attempt to offer reasons would appear to be
> completely self-defeating. If these putative reasons are
> indeed good reasons, then they will merely provide an
> illustration of the thesis that some beliefs can be
> justified rationally. Whereas if they are not good
> reasons, then they will be dismissed in the same way as
> the overtly non-rational considerations already
> discussed. Thus it seems to follow that the
> argumentation employed by the global sceptic must be
> wholly incapable of providing any genuine support for his
> scepticism. (27)

Concerning rational justification, this somewhat circular
argument seems to provide a formidable critique against the
views of global skepticism. They place the skeptic in a
double bind. As Bailey claims, "no other argument against
global scepticism seems to have the same air of brutal

finality" (28). I contend that, in part, rationalists regard Poe's texts in just such a dilemma, a position easily dismissable. Of course, considered as "fictional" Poe's works hardly deserve serious criticism from rationalist perspectives, except that in the history of Poe criticisms they have occasionally appeared in such a light.

Bailey wants to argue that the five tropes that Diogenes Laertius attributes to Agrippa and that Sextus mentions and discusses have the resources to disarm this critique of self-refutation while also committing them "to the conclusion that no claim is _ever_ rationally preferable to its contradictory" (28).

Bailey maintains that alleged self-evident arguments seem to elude the work of the tropes by providing an end to regression. Rather than trying to elude the tropes, Poe's notion of intuition accepts their consequences and aestheticizes them in a manner that foreshadows George Santayana. At any rate, Bailey notes that "it would be absurd to allege that a claim that is genuinely self-evidently true can lack any rational justification" (32). While this allegation might appeal to most rationalists attempting to formulate a self-evident proposition, the absurdity of such an affirmation remains mooted by the sixteenth-century's dilemma about revelation and faith unsupported by knowledge or propositions concerning the ineffable. If the tropes on regression ad infinitum, hypothesis, and circularity can

provide a rational justification for an assertion, then a constructed claim for self-evident truths might appear, but as Bailey has already indicated, the abandonment of the acceptability of the tropes remains a move that not many would willingly make. Poe's intuition seems to accept infinite regression, hypothesis, and circularity as given.

Bailey in an attempt to supplement the lack of the tropes in dealing with self-evident affirmations makes three points. First, he claims that "it is not necessary to identify self-evident truths with true claims about pre-evident matters of inquiry in order to be persuaded that people cannot be viewed as infallible judges of what is and is not self-evidently true" (33). Bailey looks at Descartes' assertion that "'it is perfectly evident that there must be at least as much reality in the cause as in the effect'" (33) and at Frege's attempts "to derive the axioms of arithmetic from purely logical laws" that resulted in Russell's paradox as examples "that even highly able thinkers, concentrating intently on a particular matter of inquiry, can mistakenly take a claim to be self-evidently true when it is not" (34). Thus "an epistemological guarantee" remains only if the person rather arrogantly "is prepared to take the heroic line that his intellectual powers do not suffer from the limitations which afflict the lesser intellects of the philosophers named above" (34). Poe seems to accept the fallibility of all human judges.

Second, Bailey notes that "it is plausible to suppose that any person reflecting on his own intellectual history will recall that there are some claims which he now regards as false despite his former confidence in their self-evident truth" (34). Bailey then considers the general relativist's notion of the crossing of parallel lines and a problem with the Mobius strip as examples.

Third, Bailey claims to move even "deeper" into his objections to the self-evident when he asserts that "[i]t is difficult to deny that it is logically possible for any psychological operation to go wrong without the agent involved having any realization that it has gone wrong" (35). Like Oliver Sacks, he mentions traumatic brain damage and Alzheimer's disease as examples. This gradual drift into psychology sets the way for his claim that the tropes operate more as persuasive devices rather than rational claims. Without an ultimately apparent normal from which to gauge the abnormal, Poe seems to acknowledge that psychological operations can go amiss with or without the subject's awareness of the problem.

In order to arrive at "a correct assessment of the force of the self-refutation argument," Bailey wants "to distinguish between the mature Pyrrhonist characterization of his arguments and the characterization offered by his dogmatic opponent" (36). Bailey writes that "the mature Pyrrhonist's arguments can be of great philosophical significance even

though they are not rationally compelling arguments" (36).
This he accomplishes by noting that "the Pyrrhonist would
presumably wish to describe himself as simply seeking to
persuade the dogmatist to abandon his belief that there are
such things as good reasons for accepting some claims and
rejecting others" (37). This relieves the Pyrrhonist of the
burden of bringing forth reason to his own self-defeat. In
Eureka Poe's acknowledgment, that he has proven nothing, but
only designs to suggest and convince, engages in such a
persuasive gesture. In addition Bailey asserts that the
Pyrrhonist does not appear "incoherently trying to show that
the belief that no belief whatsoever can be rationally
justified, is in some sense itself rationally superior to the
rival position that some claims can be rationally justified"
(37).

Focusing on persuasion, Bailey splits the approaches to
the tropes and his supplemental view concerning self-evidence
into the views of the skeptic and the dogmatist. Bailey
believes that the dogmatist remains obligated to regard the
tropes as chains of thought that reflect "good reasoning,"
whereas the skeptic may have a very different view of the same
tropes. The skeptic regards the use of the tropes as
different from the acceptance of them. Using Feyerabend's
arguments with a Popperian scientist as an example, Bailey
shows that the skeptic does "not [intend] to provide any
arbitrary person with a good reason for rejecting" any

rational position, rather he intends "to reduce the <u>typical adherent</u> of such a philosophy to concluding that he has good reason for abandoning his allegiance" (41). Bailey argues that

> it does not follow from the fact that an argument <u>uses</u> a certain premise, that the wielder of the argument <u>accepts</u> the premise, <u>claims to have good reasons for it</u>, or <u>regards it as plausible</u> [my underlining]. He may deny the premiss but still use it because his opponent accepts it and, accepting it, can be driven into making a desired concession. (41)

From those who presume to have a "true" insight into "reality," this review of oppositional possibilities might open the way to accusations of "bad faith," a form of a confidence game, or insincerity, but still this approach proves formally useful in arguments. Employing such a strategy openly, its users could also avoid charges of cynicism.

At any rate, according to Bailey, the skeptic has two options. One can, like Hume, displace one's attention to distractions and thus "turn [one's] attention away from the chain of speculative thought that leads to this conflict" (39), or one can move toward "the acceptance of the sceptical claim that none of our beliefs can ever be justified" (40). This difference between displacement and acceptance, Bailey asserts, marks the skeptic who starts out as a dogmatist and the "mature" skeptic who has accepted the implications of one's position. According to Bailey, this maturity reflects a turn toward questioning the trust upon which one's own

arguments rest. The questioning of this dependent trust might well reflect the skeptic's possible redistribution of his or her own approach to the psychoanalytic terms of introjection and incorporation, to a developing orality. Citing Sextus's observation of the skeptic as "having been exposed to various arguments that have undermined his trust in the rationality of his former beliefs," Bailey maintains that "the mature Pyrrhonist thinks of his epistemological arguments as having a purely therapeutic function" (42). Not realizing the implications of his arguments, the dogmatic skeptic only slowly comes to an increasing awareness of their consequences and "finds himself forced to suspend judgement on an ever-widening range of topics." This, according to Bailey, enables "him to discover the limits of human reason." After applying the same test to his own arguments that he has applied to opponents' arguments, the maturing skeptic finds that "these principles fail to meet the standards that they themselves lay down," and so "ceases to regard the tropes as good arguments." Leaving the values of this "good" open ended, Bailey explains that abandoning the rationality of his tropes, the skeptic remains convinced, however, that the "tropes are an effective means of persuading other people to suspend judgement" (44).

Thus, Bailey concludes that the developing or dogmatic skeptic remains "wholly unable to avoid seeing those very same arguments [based on the tropes] as rationally compelling arguments" while the mature skeptic regards the same arguments

"as nothing more than a form of psychological therapy" (44).
As inquiries into relations of belief and disbelief, Poe's
texts reflect awarenesses of the paradox of claims and use
inconsistency as a technique to suggest the ultimate
suspension of judgment that derives from the impossibility of
conceiving the ultimate secrets of absence. Poe turns
intuitively to aesthetics to frame his views on loss and
mourning.

<u>Note</u>

1. Hume already questions the clear distinction between
memory and the imagination. He attributes the difference
between belief and fiction to the forceful and customary
excitement of sentiment or feeling:

> the difference between <u>fiction</u> and <u>belief</u> lies in some
> sentiment or feeling, which is annexed to the latter, not
> to the former, and which depends not on the will, nor can
> be commanded at pleasure. It . . . must arise from the
> particular situation, in which the mind is placed at any
> particular juncture. Whenever any object is presented to
> the memory or senses, it immediately, by the force of
> custom, carries the imagination to conceive that object,
> which is usually conjoined to it; and this conception is
> attended with a feeling or sentiment, different from the
> loose reveries of the fancy. (<u>An Enquiry Concerning Human
> Understanding</u> 48)

Thus, the power of habit, an inherited sentiment, determines
those conceptions assented to and rejected. Hume finds
defining this feeling or sentiment a "very difficult, if not
an impossible task" (48). He tries to assert that the power
of the effect makes the difference: "belief is nothing but a
more vivid, lively, forcible, firm, steady conception of the
object, than what imagination alone is ever able to attain"
(49). The philosopher concedes that

> Nothing is more free than the imagination of man; and
> though it cannot exceed that original stock of ideas
> furnished by the internal and external senses, it has
> unlimited power of mixing, compounding, separating, and

> dividing these ideas, in all the varieties of fiction and
> vision. (47)

Thus, the possibility of confusing imagination with memory
becomes a problem. A vivid imagination seems capable of
displacing a feeble memory, as in madness and art. Still, he
tries to insist that

> It is impossible that this faculty of imagination can
> ever, of itself, reach belief, it is evident that belief
> consists not in the particular nature or order of ideas,
> but in the _manner_ of their conception, and in their
> _feeling_ to the mind. I confess, that it is impossible
> perfectly to explain this feeling or manner of
> conception. We may make use of words which express
> something near it. But its true and proper name, as we
> observed before, is _belief_; which is a term that every
> one sufficiently understands in common life. (49)

Appealing to common understanding to confirm the forcefully
felt value of belief engages in a circularity of the
culturally customary proper which remains incapable of
confirming or disconfirming the truth or reality of belief in
any particular situation or context. Poe's belief in words,
his appeals to common experience, and his view of the
impossibility of perfectly explaining conception assimilates
this kind of skeptical perspective.

Fideistically, Poe also seems familiar with the kinds of
approaches to understanding developed by such idealists as
Fichte and Schelling.

In a footnote to Fichte's _Foundations for the Entire
Science of Knowledge_, the philosopher laments the fact that
the idealistic science of knowledge has not become generally
acceptable because education kills off "one capacity for the
sake of another" (251). Then, in a rare reference to memory
he includes its killed capacity as critical: "imagination
[killed] for the sake of understanding, understanding for the
sake of imagination, or both, even, for the sake of memory;
while this [killing] continues, it [the science of knowledge]
must remain confined to a narrow circle" (251).

At any rate, Fichte encounters the problem of dividing
factual conviction from fictional deception as he considers
how the mind originally distinguishes a reflection of activity
coming from without from that coming from within. He requires
that the self function as an intuitant as opposed to the
intuited: "The self, as subject of intuition, must be opposed
to the object thereof, and so distinguished _ab initio_ from the
not-self." Without fixing or stabilizing intuition "in itself
and as such," Fichte finds his position "revolving endlessly
in a circle" (206). Without this fixity or stability, he
cannot determine how both the self and the not-self relate to
intuition or how the wavering of imagination remains

indeterminate in terms of its reflective directions toward the self and not-self. Assuming an ideal constancy for conceiving the intuition as an unity, yet retaining its imaginary, wavering trace structure, Fichte insists that

> Intuition as such is to be stabilized, so that we can conceive it as one and the same. But intuition as such is in no way stable, consisting, rather, in a wavering of the imagination between conflicting directions. That it should be stabilized, is to say that imagination should waver no longer, with the results that intuition would be utterly abolished and destroyed. Yet this must not happen; so that in intuition there must remain at least the product of this state, a trace of the opposed directions, consisting of neither but containing something of both. (206-7)

Less idealistically, Poe assumes the traces of this fixity and wavering in his notions of divine unity and nihility and, thus, in attraction and repulsion. Fichte finds three factors needed to fix intuition. First, relying on a presence of time, the fixity of reflections occurs through the spontaneity of "the self's capacity for absolute positing, or, to reason." Second, as determined or as a determinate, the imagination must have a set limit. Finally, as an intermediate faculty between the productive imagination and determinant reason, understanding must have the power to arrest or settle the transience, to make it stand. Thus, the understanding appears as either "the imagination stabilized by reason, or as reason furnished with objects by the imagination." Thus, according to Fichte, the understanding becomes subordinated as "a dormant, inactive power of the mind, the mere receptacle of what imagination brings forth, and what reason determines or has yet to determine" (207). Although assumed in the constant fixity of the wavering imagination, Fichte touts the understanding in what appears a variation in one of the three versions of the Wissenschaftslehre:

> [In understanding alone (albeit first through the power of imagination) does reality exist; it is the faculty of the actual; the ideal first becomes real therein: (hence, to understand also betokens a relation to something that certainly has to come from outside, without our assistance, but must throughout be merely indicated and intimated.) Imagination produces reality; but there is no reality therein; only through apprehension and conception in the understanding does its product become something real. --To that of which we are conscious as a product of imagination, we do not ascribe reality; yet we certainly do this to what we find contained in the understanding, to which we ascribe no

power of production at all, but merely that of conservation. . . .] (207-8)

As a dormant receptacle, the conservative understanding through its imaginative reflections, always only suggestive intimations and indications, provides the foundation for the alleged ideal reality of apprehension and conception. Thus, it resembles incorporation. Opposing natural reflections to the "artificial reflections of transcendental philosophy," Fichte finds that, following natural laws, idealists can "go back only so far as the understanding, and then always encounter in this something <u>given</u> to reflection, as the material of presentation; but that we do not become conscious of the manner in which it arrived there" (208). Ideal speculation seems able to overcome this limitation. Remarking on the impossibility of carrying the thread of his discussion any further, Fichte seems to accept the illusory quality of his project:

> If we were conscious in ordinary reflection, as we can indeed become conscious in philosophical reflection, that they [the firm convictions of the reality of things outside the self] first arrive in understanding through the medium of imagination, we should again want to call the whole thing a deception, and would be no less mistaken in this case than we were in the previous one. (208)

Thus turning apparent deception into some conviction, through a series of assumptions of constancy, Fichte stabilizes and fixes the imaginative understanding in order to erect his idealistic philosophy.

Following the lead of Fichte, in the <u>System of Transcendental Idealism</u> Schelling develops the notions of the productive intuition and the intellectual imagination. Instead of spontaneity, however, he turns toward immediacy:

> The necessity of the productive intuition, here systematically deduced from the entire mechanism of self, has got to be derived, as a general condition of knowing as such, directly from the concept thereof; for if all knowing borrows its reality from immediate cognition, it is this alone that is to be met with in intuition; whereas concepts, in fact, are merely shadows of reality, projected through a reproductive power, the understanding, which itself presupposes a higher power having no original outside itself, and which produces from within itself by a primordial force. Hence an improper idealism, a system, that is, which turns all knowledge into illusion, would have to be one which eliminated all immediacy in our cognition, <u>e.g.</u>, by positing external originals independent of our

presentations; whereas a system which seeks the origin of things in an activity of the mind that is ideal and real at once, would have, precisely because it is the most perfect idealism, to be at the same time the most perfect realism. (73)

Thus, the immediate cognition of reality comes from productive intuition, derived from the concepts of the entire mechanism of the self, whereas presupposing higher power and a productive primordial force within itself, the understanding can only project concepts as the mere shadows of reality. While understanding posits the higher power and produces through its primordial power, as a general knowing deduced directly from the concepts of the self, the intuition generalizes immediately from the concepts projected by the understanding. Here, how the derivative intuition borrows immediately from the understanding remains rather unclear. While Poe does not posit external originals independent of presentations, he does infer analogically and, then, intuitively from material perceptions through attraction and repulsion toward a unity and nihility.

Suggestive of Poe's belief that "a God, self-existing and alone existing, became all things at once, through dint of his volition" (XVI 255) and also his speculation that "[i]magination is, possibly in man, a lesser degree of the creative power in God" (VIII 283), Schelling presupposes that "productive intuition persists as I will; or that in willing itself I am compelled to present determinate objects. No actuality, no willing" (<u>System of Transcendental Idealism</u> 75-76). Schelling explains how this volition of intuition connects the imagination to the understanding by conjoining the finite and the infinite:

So through willing there straightway arises an opposition, in that by means of it I am aware on the one hand of freedom, and thus also of infinity, while on the other I am constantly dragged back into the finitude by the compulsion to present. Hence, in virtue of this contradiction, an activity must arise which wavers in the middle between finitude and infinity. For the time being we shall call this activity imagination, merely for brevity's sake, and without thereby wishing to maintain without proof that what is commonly spoken of as imagination is in fact such a wavering between finitude and infinity; or, what comes to the same, an activity mediating the theoretical and practical; the proof of all which will in fact be found in what follows. This power, therefore, which we refer to meanwhile as imagination, will in course of this wavering also necessarily produce something, which itself oscillates between infinity and finitude, and which can therefore also be regarded only as such. Products of this kind are what we call Ideas as

opposed to concepts, and imagination in this wavering is
on that very account not understanding but reason; and
conversely, what is commonly called theoretical reason is
nothing else but imagination in the service of freedom.
But that Ideas are mere objects of imagination, having
their place only in this wavering between finitude and
infinity, is evident from the fact that, once they are
made objects of the understanding, they lead to those
insoluble contradictions which Kant set forth under the
name of the antinomies; contradictions whose existence
rests solely upon the fact that either we reflect upon
the object, in which case it is necessarily finite, or
else we reflect further upon our own reflecting, whereby
the object again becomes infinite. But now it is obvious
that if the question whether the object of an Idea be
finite or infinite is dependent merely on the free
orientation of reflection, the object as such can itself
be neither the one nor the other; and if so, these Ideas
must assuredly be mere products of the imagination, that
is, of an activity such that it produces neither the
finite nor the infinite. (176)

Willing makes choice and freedom possible through its
imaginatively determinative reflections. To make the
transition from the Idea to the limited object comprehensible,
Schelling introduces a third term: "This mediating factor is
the _ideal_" (176). Thus, the ideal seems to bridge the finite
object and the infinite Idea. Believing that both spirit and
infinity remain past conception, Poe intuitively assumes that
the ideal imagination, already heterogeneously diffused, finds
a material limit through a nihility that permits an apparently
suggestive oscillation between the determinate and the
indeterminate. The vigorously enterprising hardihood of the
imagination forges a right to assumptive intuitions and, thus,
appropriates some freedom, along the borders recessively
tending toward disappearance and death. Blocking the fixity
of absolute ideality for both the self and objects, Poe's
understanding of intuition suggestively becomes a "_conviction_
arising from those inductions and deductions of which the
processes are so shadowy as to escape our consciousness, elude
our reason, or defy our capacity of expression" (XVI 206).
Restricting human understanding to arranging and rearranging
perceivable matter, the inquisitive, but perplexed, Poe
explicitly assumes as an absolute that the divine volition
created what "_could_ have been nothing but Matter in its utmost
conceivable state of----what?--of _Simplicity?_" (XVI 206).
Noting the leap of reason, Poe believes at this extreme of
simplicity "Reason flies at once to Imparticularity--to a
particle--to _one_ particle--a particle of _one_ kind--of _one_
character--of _one_ nature--of _one_ size--of one form" (XVI 207).
This absolutely unique particle proper created by the divine
will remains "'_without_ form and void'" (XVI 207). Derived

from an analogy of human birth and death, Poe marks his
unitary nihility as an assumption, a belief. This imaginative
belief of understanding, however, forces him reluctantly away
from the absolute certainty of idealism and toward skeptical
doubts, ever dependent on the contextually and materially
apparent. Unfounded and lost, an ideal variant of Schelling's
aesthetic dream fideistically haunts Poe's constrained
cosmology with a kind of transcendentalism.

Interestingly, this suggestion of the haunting problem of
distinguishing between "real" memories and imagined memories
addresses both the difficulties of separating fact from
fiction and memory from possibility of memory. Conflating the
effects of fiction and truth, Poe praises the depiction of
<u>George Balcombe</u>'s legal scene contesting a missing will:
"Fiction, thus admirably managed, has all the force and
essential value of truth" (IX 256). Engaging a host of
pressing structural difficulties, these problems with dreams
and haunting, but unremembered, memories reflect in the shocks
of cross-cultural assimilations, multiple personalities, the
status of childhood memory, animal and spirit possessions,
past life regressions, life-after-death recall, magic,
pseudoscientific mysticism, the enlightening touch of the
spiritual masters, UFO sightings, and drugged consciousnesses
to name a few. Drawing the line between the real and the
imagined in memory or fact seems far more difficult and
perplexing than transcendental and empirical assurances might
lead one to believe.

CHAPTER 3
READING GHOSTS

> Four blind men found an elephant and did not know
> what it was.
> "It is like a log," said one, who had flung
> his arms around the elephant's leg.
> "No! It is like a rope," said another, who
> had caught hold of its tail.
> "It is more like a fan," said the third. He
> was feeling the shape of the elephant's ear.
> "It is something with no beginning and no
> end," said the fourth, who was walking round and
> round the animal, feeling its sides.
> --Maria Leach, <u>Noodles, Nitwits, and Numbskulls</u>

For Poe, the legacies of doublings and losses appear as

keepings, keepings in mind and in architecture. Following

Poe, I propose such keepings as the orphanage of narrative

perspectives (the search for a memory kept of the lost parent)

and the impossibility of reading (the loss of the memory of

the lost parent). The memorial keepings and strange

identifications in "The Fall of the House of Usher" emerge as

encounters of unsolvable mystery and death, as suggestions of

a negativity seemingly without end. Memories accompany the

dreams of reading to converge through reflective images on

Poe's notion of a "point" of view as an apparently kept

mourning at the cryptic limit of a search to situate its lost

inheritance, its lost parent. Each abandoned, but sensible,

viewpoint narcissistically and blindly survives for a while

along the contextual edges of a shared space of relations and losses. That space forces attention to the architectural lodgements in memory and, in Poe, to the memorial architectonics of loss and ruin.

Before following some of the doubled images through "The Fall of the House of Usher,"[1] it seems important to recall Abraham and Torok from the chapter on mourning in terms of the variety of the memorial architectonics of crypts and their ghost effects in order to note some effects that stem from encryptions. From memories of words, images, and feelings the secret vault of the crypt gets constructed. Because an unspeakable excess of desire keeps the absence of the cherished ideal in place, the apparent topological identity of the encrypted object envelops and becomes enveloped by the identity of the subject. From this rift in the unconscious arises the structured image of the phantom. These homeless fantasies produce ghost effects and ventriloquisms. The commingling of inheritances and identities in context will focus on the ghostly differences arising from the doubled viewpoints. Also, the negativity of doubt that develops in contexts of relativity, assumption, and circularity and that opens onto regressions and discrepancies seems important.

Several critics of Poe will help situate their insights into losses on the verge of reading. An anticipated or half-forgotten mourning registers on images and memory as characterized by Francis Yates' work on mnemonics. Daniel

Tiffany's fusion of the views of Yates, Derrida, Heidegger, Abraham, and Torok in relation to the cryptic and necrophiliac space of memory allows his telepathic "transitivity" of reading to contrast with the more contiguous modification, the cryptic conveyance, that Poe's notions of reading make possible. With the memorial keepings of cryptic designs and necrophiliac conveyances situated along an imagined threshold, Poe's notions of the readers' and narrators' keepings as memorial efforts to maintain their beloved and artistic fabrications in "The Fall of the House of Usher" will make more sense despite doubly resonant and reflective drifts toward ruin and loss.

The Orphanage

Poe's awareness of an attractive connection between the shared loss of personal and cosmic memories appears in his discussion of atomic desire or tendency in <u>Eureka</u>. He writes about these atoms that conflate body and spirit:

> Nothing like <u>location</u> was conceived as their origin. Their source lies in the principle, <u>Unity</u>. <u>This</u> is their lost parent. <u>This</u> they seek always--immediately--in all directions--wherever it is even partially to be found; thus appeasing, in some measure, the ineradicable tendency, while on the way to its absolute satisfaction in the end. (XVI 220)

Thus, the lost parent serves as an explicit model for the principle of atomic unity or nothingness. The materially and spiritually orphaned atoms always seek their lost parent. Attracted to an inert economy of nihility, grief-motivated

atoms try to reenact their family romances and satisfy partially their losses through heterogeneously diffused combinations with nearby aggregates of atoms. In arranged relations, suspended from their parents, they appease their ineradicable tendencies toward a dimly recalled unity and attempt to converse through imagination and image, a limiting nihility even before arriving at their final end. Conveyed through the so-called inside and outside of all designs of memorial architectonics, necrophiliac and cryptic fascinations and longings haunt and structure the homeless orphanage. Neither simply present nor absent in terms of memory and imagination, along thresholds of perception, Poe's emotional and intellectual intuition remains and desires both the originally unlocalizable place of emergence and the unspecifiable goal as regarded from the dreamy perspective of beauty as constituting truth (see introduction to Eureka 183). With an emphatic shift from what this abandonment seems to embody as opposed to what it might not embody, hopeful dreams of love and beauty can convert into fearful nightmares.

An incompleteness and want haunt all desires and fascinations. Without an ultimate contextual foundation, not only do attempts to love become excessive and violent (thus, Mrs. Hemans challenges the skeptic to dare to love), so do fears. Whether attached to cryptic secrets or necrophiliac legacies, fears approach the shadowy uncertainties of relational context with a similar loss of consciousness,

reason, or expression. In addition to hideously unrevealable mysteries, the beginning of "The Man of the Crowd" suggests the fearful possibility of unreadability:

> It was well said of a certain German book that "_es lässt sich nicht lesen_"--it does not permit itself to be read. There are some secrets which do not permit themselves to be told. Men die nightly in their beds, wringing the hands of ghostly confessors, and looking them piteously in the eyes--die with despair of heart and convulsion of throat, on account of the hideousness of mysteries which will not _suffer themselves_ to be revealed. Now and then, alas, the conscience of man takes up a burthen so heavy in horror that it can be thrown down only into the grave. And thus the essence of all crime is undivulged. (IV 134)

While any transcendent ideal must finally remain unspoken, straining the abilities of memory, the despairing effort to confess the unconfessable raises the terrifying and oppressive specters of dead relations, but because such secrets remain impenetrable, the heavy conscience can only carry its burden into the grave. Quite past personal guilt for a crime, such as incest, vampirism, or murder, the contextual inability to obtain any absolute absolution seems overriding in this passage. In striving for supernal beauty and endeavoring to situate the dizzying and indefinite connections between cause and effect, object and design (see Harrison XVI 292), I contend, Poe's texts' interests in the psychological serve mainly to illustrate his principles. Although speculatively shame and guilt could stem from the mediated awareness of the ruptures of excessive violence, such as eating for sustenance, the focus here shall skip over such traditional concerns of the scholarship of Poe and turn to the transcendent efforts to

get beyond the memorial limit, to that negative verge allowing the fabrications of ghostly hauntings and suspended mysteries.

The Architecture of Reading

In reading "The Man of the Crowd," Auerbach finds that by following the mysterious wanderer, both the narrator and the reader end where they began. Confusing object and design, he notices the connection between reader and narrator:

> in the very act of treating the old man as if he were some impenetrable book, Poe's first person sheds light on the construction of his own opaque text, a kind of parable which serves to confess obliquely the alienating subjectivity from which he seeks to escape. Although the stranger's refusal to reveal himself heightens suspense and teases both the narrator and the reader into pursuit, the narrative shows that we can never close the gap between the self and other opened up by the sudden appearance of the double. (32)

While it remains uncertain that anyone in the tale attempts to escape objectivity, subjectivity, or alienating otherness, the strange gap between the wanderer and the narrator that doubles between the narrator and the reader indicates the textual suspense that teases or fascinates the willing reader into contextual identifications. With haste and overgeneralization many readers approach this rift with confidence and conviction. Measured in terms of the narrator's failed desire for transcendence, this apparently interminable roving without answers must seem a sickeningly senseless loss (33), rather than explorations in relational possibilities, including those of readings.

In Poe's Fiction G. R. Thompson situates his notion of Poe's romantic irony in the German Romantics and transcendentalists, including Fichte and Schelling (see the endnote for the chapter on skepticism). Thompson argues that these influences led "to Poe's ironic mockery of the ability of the human mind ever to know anything with certainty" (89). Losing sight of the sadness accompanying the loss of the ultimate, in "Usher" Thompson discovers "a basic structure that integrates all the others, a set or system of relationships that remains constant and primary, enveloping the rest with a further meaning without disturbing each as a coherent system within itself" (88-89). According to Thompson, this primary structure results from "the product of the objective synthesis generated by our perceiving as readers the double aspects of the tale as simultaneously supernaturalistic . . . and yet also as realistic in a conventional sense" (89). While Poe's text do trace a material and spiritual doubling, strangely these do not provide either subjective or objective synthesis; Poe asserts of the mysterious conditions of attraction and repulsion, "we cannot even comprehend the possibility of their conciliation" (Harrison XVI 211). Drawing on a reader response or "objective synthesis generated by our perceiving as readers" as he terms it, Thompson displaces subjectivity onto the narrator: "This multiple perception of the simultaneous or parallel levels of the tale derives principally from our

perceptions of the subjectivity of the narrator." Having
diagnosed the narrator's derangement in terms of a normative
objectivity, Thompson's reader identifies "a narrator whom we
recognize as disturbed" (89). Suspending judgment, Poe's more
skeptical reader would not hasten to intervention. Sensitized
to inevitable losses, the reader might suffer with the
unreliability, examine its recesses, and then suggest what
situational alleviations the shared trust would bear. Part of
Poe's project attempts to sensitize the reader to the
heterogeneous indeterminateness suspended between doubles,
between shared trusts and doubts.

In the interlaced networks of doubles that themselves
double, Thompson perceives the changes in aspect or "answer"
that stem from an inquisitive reader shifting identifications:

> "Usher" is a structure of interpenetrating structures
> that shifts its aspect with a slight shift of perspective
> by the reader. Given the initial focus of a reader, the
> primary answer to any question presented by the story
> varies, though the relationships among the various
> structures do not. (88)

However, this does not lead Thompson to conclude that the
questions persisting year after year reflect the readers'
shared assumptions and differences, but rather that a constant
and primary structure integrates the tale's relationships.

Reading "The Fall of the House of Usher," Dennis Pahl in
Architects of the Abyss observes that "we as readers find
ourselves in a predicament similar to that of the narrator of
that tale." Trying to turn away from the position of the
critic who, "from his privileged position outside the text,

can finally penetrate to the very heart of the 'House of Usher,'" Pahl tends toward the view that a reader, like the narrator-protagonist, "discovers only that his 'reading' is subject to further distortion, that the remodeling of the house's exterior [which doubles and displaces the narrator-reader's image] is nothing more than a <u>mis</u>reading" (3). Pahl claims "[t]his misrecognition is doubly achieved, since the house, even were the narrator to 'recognize' his own reflection, offers a self-image that is both distorted and impenetrable" (6).

Because readers stay "locked inside the radical secondariness that language represents," Pahl claims that "[a]ny reading of the story is doomed to be a disfigurement of the 'truth.'" Pahl finds "[t]he decenterness of Poe's texts . . . must have grave consequences for the reader, who is put in a position similar to that of the narrator, able to neither get <u>outside</u> (and thus attain mastery) nor to locate himself on the inside" (24). Poe might well claim that mastery, secondariness, or disfigurement would remain unidentified, if obtained. Not only does Pahl regard the narrator, and thus the reader, as a residue left after the collapse of the house, he also sees that, like the house, "the narrative too is a kind of crypt, one that dissolves the inside/outside opposition" (20).

With implications for the strangeness of reader identifications, both Pahl and Irwin link doubles and

reflections to the figure of Narcissus. Drawing on Lacan's misrecognition of the mirror-phase, Pahl sees for Ovid's Narcissus and Poe's narrator that "identity _is_ difference, the same _is_ an other'." Thus, as an unified same, identity must exclude difference and become other. Finding that "[s]uch a unity is impossible, as it can only happen in death," Pahl affirms that "in a sense the whole story may be said to demonstrate a quest for the self." Because in the story "[t]his lost unity is the self" (7), Pahl asserts that by questing for an originary state in the textual landscape, the narrator only finds misrecognition: "The 'house of being' that he has penetrated, being nothing other than a house of fiction, leads him astray instead of allowing him access to himself" (9). What this non-fictional access or mastery might resemble and what assures the (mis)reading, (mis)recognition, and straying or not straying do not get determined by Pahl.

Irwin concludes his reflections on Narcissus with a observation of the self's slippage coming from an originary indeterminacy:

> The original indeterminacy as to whether the surface of the body is an internal or external limit of the self, accounts, of course, for the necessary slippage in the use of the word "self," its referring at some moments to a whole made up of mind, body, shadow, reflected image, and dramatic role, and from another part, as in the opposition self/image. This slippage reflects that basic sense of self as simultaneously both part and whole and either part or whole, as being _both_ one half of a mutually constitutive opposition _and_ that which doubles the whole opposition in self-reflective consciousness, and at the same instant, _either_ the image in the mirror or the mirror itself. (162)

Regarding the youth's contemplations in the water as a play between part and whole, Irwin locates three key moments: first, when the youth mistakes his image for a different person; second, when he notices that his double's gestures do not include the voice and realizes that he sees his own image; and third, when "he treats his image _as if_ it were another person in order to reveal that difference in sameness that constitutes the true otherness of the reflected image." The voice's privilege and separating the image from "true otherness" remain problematic. Irwin notes the paradox that "although his image is other, it is not _an other_" and recognizes a gap between the physical and the psychic: "Narcissus can never be united with his image; his physical body can never be conjoined with his reflected body" (158). Finding any attainment of the self's origin destructive "because the original union was a differentiation, while the illusory reunion is always an attempt to merge what was originally held apart, an attempt that results not in reunion but in dissolution," Irwin's phenomenological analysis locates the strangeness of the self:

> What Narcissus clearly exhibits in the third moment, by treating his image _as if_ it were another person even though he knows it is not, is the essential (original) otherness of the self to itself, the indeterminate status of self-reflection as both a part of the body and a double of the body and as either a part of the body or a double of the body. (159)

Locating the youth's problems in the equation "that while extensity and outer surface are the same, intensity and inner

depth are not," Irwin extends what he terms "the illusion of depth," "the illusion that a physical penetration of the surface of the water provides a means of spatial access to a 'depth' or 'inner space' that is itself not spatial at all, but temporal" (161). Time thus serves as the "real" mark of inner space or depth. Recalling Freud and Bonaparte, Irwin discovers psychological parallels:

> In the light of the regressive character of narcissism, we can recognize in this scenario the basic structure of the return to the womb--the wish/fantasy that there exists an inner depth to which one can physically journey as if it were a point in space but that in fact would be a point in time, the point where/before time began for the individual consciousness at birth. It is this same structure that we find in the voyage to the abyss as a quest for the origins of the self and language. (161-62)

Whether this commingling describes Poe's or Irwin's narcissistic method(s) appears unclear. Perhaps, the slippages of the self remain less tractable for analysis and essential wholeness than Irwin assumes.

In "The 'Crypt' of Edgar Poe" Joseph Riddel sees the architectonic structure of the house from a series of uncertain, but shifting, centers:

> The house's crypt, like Usher's art, conceals the secret of the center, that it is neither a presence nor an absence but a place constructed to install a sign of presence or absence. (And as the modern philosopher of crypts has revealed, "a crypt is never natural," not a "natural place, but the striking history of an artifice, an <u>architecture</u>, an architect [sic: artifact]: of a place <u>comprehended</u> within another, but rigorously separated from it, isolated from the general space by partitions, an enclosure, an enclave" [Derrida "Fors--The Anglish Words of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok" xiv]). (129)

In addition to confusing the inside/outside distinction,
Riddel recites the cryptic memorial that structures the
artifice, the architecture, and the architect (at least, in
confusing cause and effect, Poe would agree). Marking the
(con)textuality as layers and palimpsests, Riddel situates the
unfounded constructions:

> The "House of Usher" is built out of old books, the
> fragments of legends, romances, superstitions, and quasi-
> scientific metaphors, all erected upon a "hollow coffin"
> that must be protected even as it is ultimately opened
> and revealed as the place of just another missing body,
> another simulacrum of a simulacrum. (130)

This contextuality defers and displaces ultimate meaning and
blocks insight into both the ultimate and the abyss. Noting
its "purely fictional" status of all the texts mentioned in
the tale, Riddel turns toward the "Mad Trist" as the
"simulacrum of a master book" to stress how the Ushers'
"[h]ouse and library repeat the mise en abîme of fiction-
within-fiction" (129). Although failing to develop the
uncanny haunting of the story, "The 'Crypt' of Edgar Poe"
touches on the suspended structural effects emerging from
Poe's textual skepticism.

These studies on the structure of "The Fall of the House
of Usher" suggest that while the reader perceives the lead of
the narrator, the affective and conceptual differences between
narrator and reader can shift around. While Poe's networks of
doubles and of doubles doubling allow the reader to adopt
various positions, capacitating a variety of readings, the
interposed images and narrations lead back to strange,

incomplete relations with the dead and lost. Both inside and outside, the cryptic or necrophiliac effects derived from the tale's gaps appear to depend on the reader's reflective identifications and viewpoints. With the unobtainable unity, a strange narcissistic commingling of images of identities and identifications occurs during reading. Adopted through collusions and collaborations, these strange reader identifications remain unfounded by any rational or positive value, internal or external, or by any psychological reader responses or reductive intellectual schemas. As the reader attempts to open the cryptic structure of the tale, on reflection the tale's suggestive network of images attempts to open the reader's crypt. The haunting gaps between heterogeneous doubles unsettle any closure. These losses activate the reader's resistances. Endeavors to obtain or penetrate any absolute resolution or familial security fail and raise the ghosts of suspense or the suspense of ghosts.

Poe's ghostly and knotted conjunction of lost relations undergirds and unsettles both the memories of identities and architectonic structures. Through hopeful and desperate attempts to attain adoption, even partially, a legacy of parental loss structures and forcefully effects all viewpoints. In the strange haunts between memorials, the placement of memory and, in Poe's texts, the remembrance of place, as keepings, indicate the inability to differentiate contextual memory as a cause or effect, an object or design.

The Architecture of Memory

The memories of a crypt keep the encrypted images. Situated by particular cryptic tensions, its architecture registers on readings and thus affects and effects the reflective collaborations of whoever tries to relate to the encrypted subject. Whether a crypt haunts a narrator or some main characters, the narrative viewpoint interacts through a shared necrophiliac space with the crypt's memorial.

Because memories constitute cryptic lodgements, Francis Yates' work on trained memory and its associations with architectonic locations identifies some imaged mnemotechniques that mark Poe's texts and the keeping of memories in general. Contrasting with Poe's notions of reading, Daniel Tiffany attempts to utilize the cryptic and telepathic spaces of memory as a basis for translation.

Francis Yates' The Art of Memory opens with a myth about a divine intervention of the doubles, the Dioscuri, that has broad application to Poe's texts. Simonides of Ceos faithfully praised the celestial twins in a poem for his host, Scopas, who insulted Castor and Pollux when it came time for the poet's payment. Called from the banquet by two youths who had vanished when he got outside, Simonides survived when the banquet hall's roof fell and crushed everyone inside past identification. Only by recalling the places where the guests sat could he indicate to relatives the corpse belonging to

them. Supposedly, this event suggested to Simonides the technique of the art of memory (1-2).

The differences of a collocated keeping became critical for a trained memory and connected the memorialist, a kind of cemetery guard, with a monumental preservation of the locations of the dead.

As a mnemotechnique, the practice of connecting a memory needing preservation with a remembered or imagined place became important: "topoi used by persons with a trained memory must be mnemonic loci. . . . Topics are the 'things' or subject matter of dialectics which came to be known as topoi through the places in which they were stored" (31). By conveying impressions to an imaged grave site in memory or imagination, a memorialist can locate subjects or topics undertaken more efficiently. Thus, through images an inherited and cultivated space of the dead structures and haunts memory and those reflections drawing on memory. According to the Ad Herennium, long attributed to the skeptic Cicero, cultivating "artificial" memory requires the conjunction of images of what needs memorization as forms, marks, or simulacra with a place, a locus. Like an inner writing, the Ad Herennium states, these differentiated, sequentially arranged, and moderately lighted places should appear deserted and solitary for crowded places tend to weaken the vivid impressions needed for memorization (Yates 6-8). Associated with a particular place, images must connect to

peculiar humans in striking poses of action and have the capacity to fascinate and to arouse strong emotions (10).

Almost as if he had studied the art of memory and applied it to his settings and stories, Poe strikingly isolates and shades his memorial tenements, chambers, and dwellings and peoples them with peculiarly affective characters. Constructed of images, the general necrophiliac space of memory diffuses its keeping, its tensions, and its placements across the reflective surfaces of all memorial architectonics. In contact with particular cryptic imaginations, these images can become charged and strikingly vivid, ghastly. Memory joins matter and spirit.

Conflating material habitations with habitual spiritual dwellings, places and people in Poe's memorials embody encrypted imaginations as suspensefully imaged by a narrator. As seen from the superficially obvious boundaries of fanciful narrators, mysterious arrangements of places limit and reflect the imaginative characters of their proprietor(s) just as, recessively, the memorial values of encrypted owner(s) organize the places' objects and images. Thus fascinated with the structural design surrounding death, itself impossible to perceive or conceive, narrators' visions rest on indistinct images of death, which implies there remains some different unsensed side to their images, while in rapport with the imaginative, ideal characters vanish in pursuit of their lost

unity. Allowing the reader a double approach to disappearing identifications, this structure doubles perspectives on loss.

In "Unbridled Space: Thoughts on Architecture, Mass Media, and Death," Daniel Tiffany sees Simonides' theories of images and places as alluding to "the necrophilic origins of memory" (85) and asserts that "the architectural loci of memory operate as places occupied by the dead and retain, to a large degree, the atmosphere of the tomb" (86). He stresses the telepathic and "translative" power of the cryptic space of memory through its shared architectonics of places and images: "To inhabit the telepathic space of dwelling means, finally, to be initiated into the 'use and practise' of one's death, that is, to be interred in the cryptic space of artificial memory and to undergo the general condition of man's homelessness as a living death" (83). This Heideggerian initiation or interment into the space of memory leads to a telepathic dwelling that, apparently for Tiffany, makes possible a mysterious transportation to "the other side" even as "we remain behind":

> the art of memory derives its telepathic powers from this exiled place, a dwelling that initiates us into the use and practise of our deaths. This cryptic place transports us to other destinations, and to the other side, even as we remain behind. In a process as mysterious as the disappearance of a word or an object into oblivion, the crypt preserves what is lost, translating words and images, bodies and places, oblivion and hallucination. (87)

In terms of Abraham and Torok this cryptic process remains a fantasy that implicates translation. For Poe, this otherness

seems indistinctly lost. Viewing the encrypted object as a general fetish object at once preserving and concealing an omission or gap, Tiffany argues that its bridging, its architectural <u>locus</u>, operates under the laws of transference and ephemerality:

> The translatability of place and image comes to light only with the disclosure that the art of memory is founded upon an omission: the architectural <u>locus</u>, like the fetish it preserves and conceals, is subject to the laws of ephemerality and transference which govern the phantasmic image. (87)

Thus, in general languages, cultures, and personalities operate as architectonic fetishes to conceal cryptic omissions, but according to the variety of Abraham and Torok's preservative repressions, not all cryptic omissions function as fetishes. By accepting what appears a never-ending loss, some crypts may not bridge.

J. Gerald Kennedy's <u>Poe, Death, and the Life of Writing</u> regards Poe's writings as instrumental in developing an acknowledged fetishistic impact of death on writing, self-consciousness, and the deconstructed relation of language to truth.[2] A fetishized image or word-thing, whether fictitious or "actual," becomes a desire situated between the scene of devastation and preservation, but in an uncertain context, what constitutes preservation and devastation becomes ultimately undecidable. Obtaining the image or word-thing or treating it as a fetish seems even trickier.

Although nothing memorial seems to operate beyond the general necrophiliac spaces of the shared inheritances of relation, language and culture,[3] the particular keeping of a cryptic secret, not always fetishistic, suggests a tendency toward a different kind of imaginative preservation, a preservation that might originally appear to go beyond images with a unique translation. However indistinct, even telesthetic effects and images require contexts. The ghost effects that emerge in all three tales considered here differ. Suggesting endless regressions and recessions, Poe's indefinite mournings and doubts stretch the contexts of loss past conventionally appropriate notions of fetishism and otherness. Between the artist and the therapist in "The Fall of the House of Usher," Madeline's return may or may not appear as a ghost effect. The intellectually obsessed narrator of "Morella" finds his wife's ghost materially embodied in his daughter, and the fanciful narrator of "Eleonora" finds his ghost in Eleonora's disembodied spirit. Both men try to follow their suspended relations to tombs and graves. Deflected and reflected toward the reader, the dilemma becomes whether to trust or distrust a narrative, and thus inclined toward some arranged position in relation to the doubles, the reader's regard toward the unbelievable accompanies their textual identifications. Unless remaining uncertain, the reader tends to rush into the strangeness of their fabricated assumptions. Without an appeal to any

transcendent beyond, an undecidable architecture of memories effects the preservative responses and designs of the narrators and readers.

Claiming that "the human body . . . disappears under the weight of images," Tiffany extends his reflections and inferences such that "[a]rchitectural space becomes the site of artificial memory, receding with the body and memory itself (like the primal words of language [Heidegger's _bauen_ and Abraham and Torok's cryptophores]) into oblivion" (87). When one seeks the _locus_, an infinite regress and a reflective regression recede from an allegedly preserved idea through heterogeneous layers toward suspended doubts and death. This regress effectively erodes absolute foundation and makes possible as a fantasy of keeping the conveyance of so-called "transitivity." From the isolated, shadowy domains of Poe's narrators, texts operate under a doubled omission. Not only does he attempt to convey a suggestive nihility through aesthetic ideals; more contiguously, he follows the transparent edges of images until at a sensible limit they become indistinctly lost. Thus, the therapeutic predispositions of Usher's friend reveals an inability to analyze the tarn's images, and Roderick's family collapses and vanishes. In "Morella" and "Eleonora" the narrators' pursuits lead each to encounter two females, and although only Ermengarde survives, she too seems marked by Eleonora's loss. Only a preservative gesture before this tendency toward

forgetfulness and oblivion interrupts a dizzying circularity or regression.

Thus the particular design of a crypt's memorial registers on the narrator's selective reading of such topographical images as buildings and waters. In Poe's tales the narrator usually reflects on more ideal or spiritualized characters than himself, characters about to vanish. Through doubly mirrored images and characters, different readings of particular memorial embodiments within the story help situate the shadowy boundaries and possibilities marking cryptic disappearances. As a foil operating from the upper artistic current, a fanciful or empirical narrator conveys through a shared memorial architectonics the imaginative ideals bordering on the secret losses that organize the text's lost keeping. Narrative interruptions attempt to arrest and suggest the recessions of losses leading toward the lost. Through a doubled necrophilia, the narrator and the reader share a shadowy and secret necromancy and pause reflectively over particular images that suggestively reveal and conceal a mysterious negativity. A lost memory of a shared pleasure or crime orphans the tensions that reflectively double and keep through the textual arrangements and that effect the collusive reader.

Narrative as Keeping

As the reader and the narrator relate to a text as a shared place of memory and as both place and memory mediate the absent and dead, the narrator and the reader relate to loss through the locations of words and images. For readers or narrators contextualized in layers of constructions and networks of trust and doubt, memory positions necrophiliac and cryptic images between the general and particular by attempting to follow structural clues. Just as Abraham and Torok's crypts' constructions depend on the arranged tensions between introjective processes and incorporative fantasies, so texts depend on the contexts of narration and reading. Memory belongs properly neither to the narration nor to the reading. As variants of oral trust and dependency, these structures mark similarities and differences and adopt situations that in turn negotiate additional, different positions. As Poe's narrators discuss architectural features, they situate the arrangement within networks of memory and place. Stranger than any "romantic fallacy," the incoherent structures of buildings and landscapes suggest negativities that while articulating the narrators' losses, do not properly belong to any construct, either inside or outside the text. Emerging from indistinct shadows, keeping serves as a collateral arrangement of memorial structures. Positioned in an imagined space of memory and language, the narrator's and the reader's

structures relate across contextual gaps making possible appearances and keepings.

Poe often cites Lord Bacon as truly claiming that "There is no exquisite beauty . . . without some <u>strangeness</u> in the proportion" (Harrison II 250). Connected to orphanage, this mediated strangeness affects arrangements of architecture and memory. Poe's stories' haunting wonders and indefinite vacillations suggest these strange ghost effects and suspensions of judgment. As shall appear, in terms of architectural and psychological identifications, both Roderick and his friend discuss these arrangements, their connections, and their effects at some length. Disappearing or becoming irresolvable at a limit, keeping could refer among its many appearances to a revealing or concealing of certain elements, to a particular structure of components, or to the effects of arrangements. Attending to the architectural arrangement of furniture and then to the construction of a building or a plot will demonstrate the spatial tendency of Poe's aesthetic, and then we will consider some effects his texts tried to achieve with readers.

In "The Philosophy of Furniture" Poe sees a cohesion holding together a chamber's interior decor and terms this its keeping as he applies his aesthetics to the often faulty American tastes:

> The most usual defect is a want of keeping. We speak of
> the keeping of a room as we would of the keeping of a
> picture--for both the picture and the room are amenable
> to those undeviating principles which regulate all

> varieties of art; and very nearly the same laws by which
> we decide on the higher merits of a painting, suffice for
> decisions on the adjustment of a chamber. (XIV 102)

While this incorporated architectonic arrangement applies to the "adaptation to use" in any embodied design (XIV 103), the imaginatively critical Poe alludes to the undeviating principles of his dogmatism about the mathematical laws pertaining to two-thirds of versification. However, not even these laws or principles can substitute for taste and intuition in relation to the fitting constitution, at once the artist and the art. Drawing on the already ruined notions of imagination and fancy, Poe's texts reflect an aesthetic awareness of negativity's unsettling suggestions as critical in decisions requiring adjustment. Nihility seems to stimulate the imagination. Thus, the artist and the artist's cryptic memorials appear symmetrically adapted through a tasteful keeping of memory. Through this sufficient keeping a relation develops between a person and that person's habitual dwelling and spatial relations.

This designed keeping reflects in the collocation of plots. As seen in the introduction, although shuddering at imperfection and incompleteness, the artist becomes dumb when confronting the utmost conceivable infinity of possible beginnings and ends. Defining plot as "<u>that in which no part can be displaced without ruin to the whole</u>" in a review of <u>Night and Morning</u> (X 117), the critic constructs an architectural analogy to elaborate the definition and the

artistic perspective required for an effort at fabricating an ideal plot:

> It may be described as a building so dependently constructed, that to change the position of a single brick is to overthrow the entire fabric. In this definition and description, we of course refer only to that infinite perfection which the true artist bears ever in mind--that the unattainable goal to which his eyes are always directed, but of the possibility of attaining which he still endeavours, if wise, to cheat himself into the belief. (X 117)

The imaginative artist should deceptively believe in the possibility of an artistically infinite perfection or of constructing an entire or whole fabric. But such a structure remains a cheat or deception. Recalling that only the unknowable divinity can relate cause to effect, Poe claims in Marginalia that in constructing a plot:

> we should aim at so arranging the points, or incidents, that we cannot distinctly see, in respect to any one of them, whether that one depends from any one other, or upholds it. In this sense, of course, perfection of plot is unattainable in fact,--because Man is the constructor. The plots of God are perfect. The Universe is a plot of God. (XVI 10)

Poe appears to encourage the faith that, godlike, the suggestive fabricator can approach that conflated construct in which cause and effect reciprocally converse, and support and dependency remain indistinct. Leading to incompleteness and a ghostly and suspended indeterminacy, the universal plot of god has grave implications in that, for its orphans, perfection remains impossible. Although ultimately there appears no basis for preferring imagination over fancy, Poe's texts focus on the effects of pursuing supernal beauty, that

transcendent and ideal suggestiveness. In the three tales considered here, contextually, the pursuit seems to stimulate what gets seen as beauty and destructively hastens death. Perhaps Poe's "unity of effect" functions as a confidence game or a cheat of perfection. Any cheat of keeping or any displacement of a dependent part always indicates the incomplete and imperfect design of any plot. For Poe, all keepings with their imperfections remain grave ruins.

The effect of reading such constructs creates a vacillation or oscillation in trust and distrust in relation to the depiction. To the extent that a reader situates some identifications between the doubled tendencies toward the transparent and the suggestive, an engagement of introjective processes and incorporative fantasies occurs. In addressing the indistinctnesses of the ruined text, a reader doubly encounters his or her tendencies toward the strange keeping of ruin.

In Poe's "The Coliseum" a pilgrim arrives at the Roman ruin, calls upon "Vastness! and Age! and Memories of Eld! / Silence! and Desolation! and dim Night!" among the crumbled structures, and feels the ruin's strong charms and spells evoking spectral scenes. Wondering if "these gray stones" of the once grand Roman ruin alone remain, at the poem's end the reflective narrator seemingly cites himself in citing the stones' echoes:

> "Not all"--the Echoes answer me--"not all!
> Prophetic sounds and loud, arise forever

> From us, and all Ruin, unto the wise,
> As melody from Memnon to the Sun.
> We rule the hearts of the mightiest men--we rule
> With a despotic sway all giant minds.
> We are not impotent--we pallid stones.
> Not all our power is gone--not all our fame--
> Not all the magic of our high renown--
> Not all the wonder that encircles us--
> Not all the mysteries that in us lie--
> Not all the memories that hang upon
> And cling around about us as a garment,
> Clothing us in a robe of more than glory." (VII 57)

The mystery, wonder, magic, memories, and power of ruins weave a contextual and despotic rule through the enchanting construct of inherited traditions. The "not all" accompanies each remainder, each ruin. While whether the answering echo belongs properly to the ruin or the pilgrim remains indistinct, a ghostly and cryptic power whispers prophetically and telepathically through the stones' fabric that not all has gone. The stones' ruins reflect this "not all" and indicate the lack of god's completion or perfection. Between ruin and reflection some things remain. Particular hauntings accompany particular designs. Some memories hang on and cling to the stone ruins like a fabric covering them in more than glory. Recalling Morella's giant mind, these echoes rule forcefully the hearts and minds of the mighty and, presumably, the less powerful too. Between the pilgrim's echo and the stones' own articulations, the quote no longer seems simply self-citation. It seems to take a value and force strangely its own. Between reflections and ruins, these doublings warrant attention to the memorial structures, the haunting boundaries and keepings, of Poe's dwellings.

In his review of <u>Sheppard Lee</u> Poe finds fault with the explicit directness of the novel's approach to metempsychosis or palingenesis and explains his approach to such absurd incredibilities. He explains his preferred method of indirectness in presenting such ghostly miracles:

> It consists in a variety of points--principally in avoiding as may easily be done, that <u>directness</u> of expression which we have noticed in Sheppard Lee, and thus leaving much to the imagination--in writing as if the author were firmly impressed with the truth, yet astonished at the immensity, of the wonders he relates, and for which, professedly, he neither claims nor anticipates credence--in minuteness of detail, especially upon points which have no immediate bearing upon the general story--this minuteness not being at variance with indirectness of expression--in short, by making use of the infinity of arts which give verisimilitude to a narration--and by leaving the result as a wonder not to be accounted for. It will be found that <u>bizarreries</u> thus conducted, are usually far more effective than those otherwise managed. The attention of the author, who does not depend upon explaining away his incredibilities, is directed to giving them the character and the luminousness of truth, and thus are brought about, unwittingly, some of the most vivid creations of human intellect. The reader, too, readily perceives and falls in with the writer's humor, and suffers himself to be borne on thereby. On the other hand what difficulty can there be in leaving us uninformed of the important facts that a certain hero <u>did not</u> actually discover the elixir vitae, <u>could not</u> really make himself invisible, and <u>was not</u> either a ghost in good earnest, or a bona fide Wandering Jew? (IX 138-39)

This suggestive indirection has led to numerous problems in interpreting Poe. Not only does a tale's imaginatively minute verisimilitude have no apparent bearing on a story, its author makes no claims for credence for the wonders and incredibilities presented. Yet, without ultimate assurance, all confidence and conviction must spring from assumptions in relation to losses.

The critic views a reflective reader as perceiving and falling in with a writer's fluid amusement and as suffering with its charged currents of carriage. Following different doubles' relations to indistinct shadows, the reader allows and suffers the lack of information. By not addressing credence or explaining incredibilities, the author abandons the uninformed reader to confront suggestive wonders. Confronted with the unaccountable and unwilling to accept orphanage, a reader often supplies the "missing" (con)text by drawing on his or her tendencies and assumptions. However improper, accepting unaccountability and orphanage permits a more or less closer reading of the structural designs of indistinct loss.

Tending toward a conceptual limit, the constructs suggested by Poe create for readers an atmosphere of the indefinite accompanying indirectness. Skeptically and mournfully attuned to imaginable losses, a poet embodies indefinite dreams through shadows and mysteries. In Marginalia the critic praises Tennyson's art wrought from poetic inconsistency as ideal, indefinite, and dreamy:

> If the author did not propose to himself a suggestive indefinitiveness of meaning, with a view of bringing about a definitiveness of vague and therefore of spiritual effect--this, at least, arose from the silent analytical promptings of that poetic genius which, in its supreme development, embodies all orders of intellectual capacity.
> I know that indefinitiveness is an element of the true music--I mean of the true musical expression. Give to it any undue decision--imbue it with any very determinate tone--and you deprive it, at once, of its ethereal, its ideal, its intrinsic and essential

> character. You dispel its luxury of dream. You dissolve
> the atmosphere of the mystic upon which it floats. You
> exhaust it of its breath of fäery. It now becomes a
> tangible and easily appreciable idea--a thing of the
> earth, earthy. (XVI 28-29)

Thus, attuned to the vibratory harmonies of music, a poet relies upon an indefinite suggestiveness associated with the ideal, ethereal, and mystic. Embodying the fanciful and the imaginative, intuition floats on a wavering balance between the determinate and indeterminate. Bordering tangible sensations, these suggestive breaths, luxuries, and atmospherics suspend from a haunting vagueness of spiritual effect or nihility for which poetry and music allegedly strive. Not accidentally, a similar indefiniteness arises between doubt and credibility.

Reflections on a Memorial Architecture

As perception or conception requires memories for its discernments, a reflective reader engages memory's tendencies toward necrophiliac images or cryptic imaginations to perceive, fall in or situate, and suffer with an embodied text. "The Fall of the House of Usher" arranges a particular relational tendency between a narrator mostly inclined toward a diffusive and empirical point of view and Roderick mostly inclined toward a concentrated and ideal perspective. Each orientation reflects on its inheritance and tends asymmetrically to doubts and mournings leading toward the lost and dead. The story delves into the possibilities of reading

by depicting the narrator's embodied images on the lost limits
of reflection and the Ushers' imaginative reflections on the
dead limits of embodiment. From an upper-current of fancy,
the medically-oriented observer tries to narrate the memorial
events he encounters on a visit with the artistic proprietor
of the house, Roderick Usher, but the guest admits that he
"should fail in attempt to convey an idea of the exact
character of the studies, or of the occupations, in which he
involved me, or led the way" (III 282).

Depicting a suggestive imagination as seen from a
perspective of transparent fancy, the narrator's failed
endeavor suggests indirectly a contrasting view through "the
lofty and spiritual ideality" of his host (III 292), while
typifying Roderick's seemingly abnormal ideality as "excited
and highly distempered" (III 282). Mirroring notions of
analytic dissection and cryptic crime, the guest's and host's
different reflections on embodiment require a look at their
views of the Ushers' house and the respective limits they find
in the tarn and vault. Then, with the narrator's therapeutic
assessment of Roderick and the brother's love for his sister,
the men's memorial images of place and human character suggest
their different interpretative reflections on texts and
readings. The narrator's vision of the dwelling, his friend,
and the function of textuality comes first because he hosts
and writes the story. Finally, the men's shared crimes in
viewing the sister's body, the cryptic movements gradually

leading to her haunting arrival, the reading and interpretations of the "Mad Trist," Roderick's delivery, and the guest's temporary escape illustrate the phantasmic conveyance emerging from embodiments and reflections. Despite the ultimate impossibility of conception, the suspenseful story suggests how through currents of doubt and mourning a sensible meaning may haunt an embodiment as a memorial inheritance of the dead and lost, as a reading.

The Narrator's Fancy

Suspended between the medical empiricism of the family and the idealism of his friend, the narrator doubles each in his scrutinizing efforts to situate the haunting observations on which he bases his remembrance, his story. Embodied in his visions and revisions of the tarn and Ushers' unhomely house, the guest's reflections tend toward a medical orientation and psychological diagnoses that cast his friend and textuality into a utilitarian and therapeutic function. Ultimately, the narrator's necrophilia fails to penetrate or analyze their mystery, but the anatomically fascinated endeavor helps delimit an approach to reading and narration.

The tarn and its reflections suggest the empirical limits for the narrator's tale. Attempting therapeutically to relieve his own insufferable depression on arriving in the Ushers' bleak habitation, the sojourner tries an experiment to

diffuse the forceful sorrow of his first impressions by relocating its imaged elements. He explains:

> It was possible, I reflected, that a mere different arrangement of the particulars of the scene, of the details of the picture, would be sufficient to modify, or, perhaps to annihilate its capacity for sorrowful impression; and, acting upon this idea, I reined my horse to the precipitous brink of a black and lurid tarn that lay in unruffled lustre by the dwelling, and gazed down-- but with a shudder even more thrilling than before--upon the remodelled and inverted images of the gray sedge, and the ghastly tree-stems, and the vacant eye-like windows. (III 274)

Insufficiently, this "somewhat childish experiment" only heightens a fearful terror, what he wants to term a superstition, stemming from his own melancholia (III 276). The ruined embodiment holds, and rearrangement neither changes nor annihilates his reading of the scene. Mirroring the habitation in vivid detail, the black and unruffled tarn persistently keeps the oppressive atmosphere of its domain, despite his goading of the imagination to remodel, reinterpret, or invert it.[4] The thrilling oppression of the waters' shadowy and silent images suggests Poe's notion of attractive perversity as, increasingly unnerved, the viewer peers past a precipitous edge, over a verge, along a steep descent, and onto the inky fluidity below. Straining for an insight neither simply objective nor subjective, the fanciful traveler sees the inverted and remodelled images of ruin sunken in the blackness as gray, vacant, and ghastly. The darkly fascinated Narcissus gazes openly into a mirrory

embodiment of loss capable of overpowering his positivist and therapeutic dreams.

The tarn marks the watery boundary over which the fanciful narrator transports himself and his horse to bridge the recesses of the dream-dwelling. In this habitation, the guest seems to gain access to Roderick's strange ideality, a dream within a dream. Lost even before he allegedly crosses over, he attempts to fortify himself with an empirical appeal to the "law" of sentiments, but he has so labored on his imagination as to believe in a strange fancy, that a particular atmosphere of "melancholic gloom" hung about the house and its domain:

> I have said that the sole effects of my somewhat childish experiment--that of looking down within the tarn--had been to deepen the first singular impression. There can be no doubt that the consciousness of the rapid increase of my superstition--for why should I not so term it?-- served mainly to accelerate the increase itself. Such, I have long known, is the paradoxical law of all sentiments having terror as a basis. And it might have been for this reason only, that, when I again lifted my eyes to the house itself, from its image in the pool, there grew in my mind a strange fancy--a fancy so ridiculous, indeed, that I but mention it to show the vivid force of the sensations which oppressed me. (III 276)

Reeking up from decomposing trees, gray walls, and the silent pool, this singularly impressive atmosphere conflicts with the scientific orientation and appears to the guest in images of a depressive miasma, "a pestilent and mystic vapour, dull, sluggish, faintly discernible, leaden-hued" (III 276). This vividly strange and dreamy force persistently terrifies him and shakes his assurances with shadowy suspensions. The

forceful and uncanny superstition recalls him to his own losses, omissions, and inconsistencies. He questions whether he should term his oppressed sensations a superstition.

Still, he resists the introjective slide toward loss. After all, he has come to alleviate his host's malady. Just as the narrator fails to recall or see himself in the reflection of the house, so too, if paradoxically, he reserves proper health and sanity for himself as opposed to the bewildering and baffling disorders of the Ushers. Similarly, failing to see his already doubled condition, he fearfully attributes his contagious infection to Roderick's "fantastic yet impressive superstitions" (III 290).

Like the hasty and, perhaps, threatened analyst noted by Abraham and Torok, his own diagnostic narcissism muffles and seals off his responsive sensitivity to the cryptically haunting influence by invoking images of his childish and nostalgic experimental method (see "Introjection-- Incorporation" 15). Although the narrator admits to an insoluble mystery in contemplating or analyzing the power of the house's combination of "very simple natural objects" (Harrison III 274), he fails to accept the implications of that doubt for his knowledge. With these hallucinatory resistances and attitudes as permeable barriers, he believes he transports himself across the black and lurid waters and transfers himself into the memorial house on the other side for further observation.

Still outside and trying to shake off a first
superstitious impression of the gloom and "what <u>must</u> have been
a dream," the narrator takes a different fanciful glance and
scans "more narrowly the real aspect of the building" (III
276). This dreamy revision of the material embodiment
duplicates the earlier attempted incorporation, but situates
the splitting inconsistency more precisely. His revision
notes the "excessive antiquity" of the coffin-like structure
and discovers a fracture that runs along the house's surface:

> The discoloration of ages had been great. Minute fungi
> overspread the whole exterior, hanging in a fine tangled
> web-work from the eaves. Yet all this was apart from any
> extraordinary dilapidation. No portion of the masonry
> had fallen; and there appeared to be a wild inconsistency
> between its still perfect adaptation of parts, and the
> crumbling condition of the individual stones. In this
> there was much that reminded me of the specious totality
> of old wood-work which has rotted for long years in some
> neglected vault, with no disturbance from the breath of
> the external air. Beyond this indication of extensive
> decay, however, the fabric gave little token of
> instability. Perhaps the eye of a scrutinising observer
> might have discovered a barely perceptible fissure,
> which, extending from the roof of the building in front,
> ran down the wall in a zigzag direction, until it became
> lost in the sullen waters of the tarn. (III 276-77)

Mirroring the physical image of Roderick Usher and a vibrant
network of doubles, the house recalls for the narrator a
specious totality, an illusory solidity, of extensively
decayed wood-work long enclosed in an undisturbed and
neglected crypt. Dependent on the guest's reflections, an
introjective fluidity of loss casts the ideal totality of the
habitation into doubt. A network of rhizomic fungi
overspreads the whole exterior surface and hangs from the

building's highest eaves. Yet, almost incoherently, he claims that the fabric gives little sign of instability or even of extraordinary dilapidation. In this wild inconsistency, the ruin does not appear ruined, and the instable seems stable. The habitation stands intact for "[n]o portion of its masonry had fallen" and, immune from weather changes, no outside breath of air had disturbed its spell of rotten entirety.

Despite the rhizomic fungi covering the walls and the "barely perceptible fissure" zigzagging down the front of the bleak wall and becoming lost in the tarn's waters, the image of the decayed ruin of Roderick's inherited patrimony seems to remain whole, undilapidated, stable, and perfectly adapted. The narrator's scrutinizing eye observes the articulated surface of loss and situates a slight fracture that seems to threaten the embodiment with a fissuring incoherence and collapse. Like the brother's incoherence, a wild inconsistency marks the edifice's surface as its apparent, "perfect adaptation of parts" contrasts with "the crumbling condition of the individual stones." Introjectively, this reflective adaptation makes possible the narrator's dreamy keeping of the unified effect of the dwelling's specious totality.

Passing over the reflective tarn and into the dream-dwelling, the grief-stimulated narrator fancies the once familiar images unfamiliar, the homely unhomely. Going through the "dark and intricate passages to the studio" (III

277), he remembers something like the furnishings in the house, but again notes their contribution to heightening his earlier sentiments:

> While the objects around me--while the carvings of the ceilings, the sombre tapestries of the walls, the ebon blackness of the floors, and the phantasmagoric armorial trophies which rattled as I strode, were but matters to which, or to such as which, I had been accustomed from my infancy--while I hesitated not to acknowledge how familiar was all this--I still wondered to find how unfamiliar were the fancies which ordinary images were stirring up. (III 277)

Each new attempt to elude the scene's harsh gloom uncannily underscores a wondrous loss of familiarity. The accustomed objects of infancy register as unsettlingly unfamiliar. Uncertainly approaching the poetic, the narrator tries to attribute this strange conversion to his gloomy fancies or dreams.

Yet, something disturbingly ideal resonates in the Usher's domain. Recombining his memories of the familiar into the strange, a persistent tendency to loss seems to whisper through the remembered objects of infancy. If the context has had this impact upon the narrator's recall, then his memory seems subject to the vivific forces of imagination and fancy. Predictably, this inconsistency between familiarity and unfamiliarity extends past the tenement's threshold onto the narrator's view of Roderick's body as well. Although the guest admits that "many years had lapsed since our last meeting" (III 274), he seems quite willing to assert that these years amount to only a brief period: "Surely, man had

never before so terribly altered, in so brief a period, as had Roderick Usher!" (III 278). Prepared by the letter's appeal for relief and reminiscences of their shared childhood, the guest finds his host's vacillating sullenness and vivacity problematic: "In the manner of my friend I was at once struck by an incoherence--an inconsistency" (III 279). The narrator's memory and its imagined integration do not function independently of the imaginative ruins among which he discovers himself. Working through the imagination and, hence, on fancy, the necrophilia established by memory seems to unsettle, before these particularly cryptic reflections, the impressive images of the "real aspects" upon which many a medical man would insist.

The medically-oriented narrator diagnoses the cadaverous brother as a hypochondriac and/or hysteric and seems to concur with the physician's opinion of the sister: "A settled apathy, a gradual wasting away of the person, and frequent although transient affections of a partially cataleptic character, were the unusual diagnosis" (III 282). As doubles sharing a similar cryptic inheritance, the brother's symptoms manifestly swing between a "tremulous indecision" and an "energetic concision" (III 279), while Madeline's appear as an concentrated indifference. The nervous agitation of the oppressed therapist, Roderick's infected double, increases as his host's energies abate after his sister's temporary entombment. Bewildered, the narrator finds his friend's

symptoms fascinating: "He suffered much from a morbid acuteness of the senses" (III 280). This morbid and cryptic hypersensitivity includes taste, touch, smell, and most importantly, sight and hearing: "his eyes were tortured by even a faint light; and there were but peculiar sounds, and these from stringed instruments, which did not inspire him with horror" (III 280). Roderick appears sensitive to the suggestive vibrations from a negativity, whether imagined or "real." This cryptic survival seems to impart almost extrasensory, telesthetic powers to the host.

Responding with a visit, the narrator obeys unhesitatingly what he considers "a very singular summons" (III 275). Admitting "of no other than a personal reply," a wildly importunate letter from Roderick reaches him "in a distant part of the country" (III 274). The narrator describes his impression of the epistle:

> The MS. gave evidence of nervous agitation. The writer spoke of acute bodily illness--of a mental disorder which oppressed him--and of an earnest desire to see me, as his best, and indeed his only personal friend, with a view of attempting, by the cheerfulness of my society, some alleviation of his malady. (III 274)

Intriguing him with a singular disorder, the letter asks for a visit in order to attempt some relief of Roderick's bodily and mental malady. Flattering and deceiving himself into a therapeutic hope that he could intervene positively to the letter's cry for help, on arrival the narrator finds his medical and mental ideas inadequate to grasp the shadowiness of the Ushers' mournful losses. Like negativity, the darkness

of his host's inherited losses and deaths remains affective, but inconceivable and unimaginable. Yet, striving toward some meaning, the haunted therapist attempts a hallucinatory incorporation of the incredible events into his story.

Through sharing music, paintings, and readings with his host, the art therapist gains a closer intimacy "into the recesses of his spirit," only to discover the impossible futility of alleviation. His patient appears past cure or solace. The failed narrator admits that as he got closer,

> the more bitterly did I perceive the futility of all attempt at cheering a mind from which darkness, as if an inherent positive quality, poured forth upon all objects of the moral and physical universe, in one unceasing radiation of gloom. (III 282)

Bordering death and articulated through layers of aesthetic productions, this radiant darkness fascinates the narrator's necrophiliac curiosity. If the guest's readings fail to distract the brother's flow of mourning, the host's readings and interpretations do not fail to influence the narrator. The guest becomes concerned for his own sanity:

> It was no wonder that his condition terrified--that it infected me. I felt creeping upon me, by slow yet certain degrees, the wild influence of his own fantastic yet impressive superstitions. (III 289-90)

Infecting his reflective images, an impure contamination disrupts and taints his medical observations, but doubling the anatomic interests of the medical men and fascinated by the familial decomposition, the reflective necrophiliac remains to witness the wild insanity of the scene.

The narrator's attempts to distract Roderick from mourning and, on the evening of the storm, from a "mad hilarity" or "restrained <u>hysteria</u>" by the folly of reading stem from some familiarity with medical ideas (III 291). As the storm outside the dwelling breathes its external air on the specious totality of the home, the narrator ties to soothe his friend by reading Sir Launcelot Canning's "Mad Trist":

> I indulged a vague hope that the excitement which now agitated the hypochondriac, might find relief (for the history of mental disorder is full of similar anomalies) even in the extremeness of the folly which I should read. (III 292)

Hoping to displace his host's alleged hypochondria and preserving his own therapeutic dreams, despite their acknowledged futility in this case, the guest attempts to provide a relief through the folly of reading. Ultimately, this cheat of keeping fails to relieve the brother's increasing agitation, but helps excite interpretative echoes and vacillations that suggest a final rest. Derived from the folly of his own reading, the persistent affirmation of familiarity with the history of mental disorders, its diagnoses, and its anomalies provides the bewildered narrator, the guardian of this strange case history, with the recessive possibility of his own insanity and disappearance.

Roderick's Imagination

Suspended between his guest's reflections tending toward the relief or alleviation of his constitutional malady and the

inherited familial domain, a beloved sister and dwelling, Roderick seeks a double deliverance, a satisfaction either heterogeneous or concentrated into a unity and nihility. Embodied in his house and his music, poetry, painting, and reading, the brother's ideal spirituality tends toward a passionately desired cure for the family evil, yet he also calls for outside solace. Perhaps his search succeeds, but recedes past the thresholds of reflective sensibility in a cryptic collapse.

From inside what the narrator takes as a dream-dwelling, Roderick believes that the vegetable sentience of all things extends to the arrangement of the stones of his house. Elaborated from a keeping of habit and habitation, his beliefs suggest an inanimate basis for sentience as an inversion of dying. The narrator explains this belief:

> The belief, however, was connected . . . with the gray stones of the home of his forefathers. The conditions of sentience had been here, he imagined, fulfilled in the method of collocation of these stones--in the order of their arrangement, as well as in that of the many _fungi_ which overspread them, and of the decayed trees which stood around--above all, in the long undisturbed endurance of this arrangement, and in its reduplication in the still waters of the tarn. Its evidence--the evidence of the sentience--was to be seen, he said, . . . in the gradual yet certain condensation of an atmosphere of their own about the waters and walls. The result was discoverable, he added in that silent, yet importunate and terrible influence which for centuries had moulded the destinies of his family, and which made _him_ what I now saw him--what he was. (III 286-87)

This sketch provides the host's connection between body and mind, between ordered stones, fungi, decay, reduplication, and sentience. Contrasting with the visitor's revisions of the

superficial symmetry of the house, this reversed animism, in which the inanimate strangely and insistently intrudes into the mind with a "supposititious force," accounts for the recluse's view of sentience (III 281). Although conveyed in terms too shadowy for restatement, according to the guest, Roderick believes that the physique of his tenement had brought about an influential effect on his morale: "an influence which some peculiarities in the mere form and substance of his family mansion, had, by dint of long sufferance . . . obtained over his spirit" (III 281). Like the narrator, the host finds that context gives rise to his sensations and ideas, but through long dwelling and from a perspective of imaginative symmetry, the ideal artist identifies his appearance and entity with this material and spiritual reduplication of place. While the narrator claims that "[s]uch opinions need no comment" (III 287), his assertion remains doubtful.

Hardly resolved, the speculative distinctions, supposedly demarcating the inanimate from the animate and the sentient from the nonsentient, call for almost interminable and endless comment. Just as the bewildering network between body and mind frustrates the founding of certain ontologies and epistemologies, so too separating the animate from the inanimate thwarts positive attempts at founding a science of "life." In this passage Roderick joins contiguously the inorganically inanimate, water and stone, with fungi and human

sentience. The brother tracks his inherited identity, what he regards as the fabric of his own body and entity, to "the method of collocation of the stones" of his forefather's house. This inherited contiguity of matter and spirit, an architectonic syntax, consists in a keeping of the stone's arrangement capable of multiple readings, capable of conveying familiar images into an unfamiliar imagination and familial imagination into the cryptically unfamilial. For the empiricist the decrepit house seems to mirror a human body bordering on decomposition, and for the idealist it articulates his identity, however ill and disordered. Seeking delivery, this adaptation to use of arranged elements expresses an unsettling approach to both ideal totality and material speciousness.

Madeline's vault embodies the ideal core of the tale, the imaginative heart of the corpus. From this location of temporary entombment, echoes cryptically vibrate through apparently familial and familiar doubles. The donjon-keep marks the shadowy limit through which suggestions of negativity may whisper. Fearful of the dissecting designs of her medical men, Madeline's brother does not wish to place her body in "the remote and exposed situation of the burial-ground of the family" (III 288), so together the guest and the host encoffin and bear the "mournful burden" to a temporary rest. The narrator describes the crypt:

> The vault in which we placed it (and which had been so long unopened that our torches, half smothered in its

> oppressive atmosphere, gave us little opportunity for investigation) was small, damp, and entirely without means of admission for light; lying, at great depth, immediately beneath that portion of the building in which was my own sleeping apartment. It had been used, apparently, in remote feudal times, for the worst purposes of a donjon-keep, and, in later days, as a place of deposit for powder, or some other highly combustible substance, as a portion of its floor, and the whole interior of a long archway through which we reached it, were carefully sheathed with copper. The door, of massive iron, had been, also, similarly protected. Its immense weight caused an unusually sharp grating sound, as it moved upon its hinges. (III 288)

The tomb in which the men place the body appears small, dark, and damp. In the oppressive atmosphere half-smothered torches provide little light to illuminate or explore the vault. To the narrator its contours and limits remain mostly out of sight, unknown, and unconceived. Suggesting a family evil, this hole served the "worst purposes of a donjon-keep," presumably some unspecified feudal violence of torture, imprisonment, and death. Later, it became a storage deposit for explosives. An indefinite inheritance of violence and crime, like a family secret, haunts the vault and its abject body with an oppressive constitutional malady. With Roderick's conflation of structure and sentience, any movement in this memorable place might stimulate vibrations near and far through the house's fabric.

For protection, copper sheathes a long archway and part of the chamber. A weighty copper-clad, iron door seals the enclave's threshold. This preservative defense attempts to guard against the possibility of an explosive combustion or violent eruption. At once capable of resonating with

additional images of portals in the tale and of assimilating the wasted body, the sealable orifice suggests a digestive orality that includes a long gullet-archway and a stomach-crypt. The men deposit their "mournful burden upon tressels within this region of horror" (III 288). This open and braced framework suspends the inert load of the body and its wooden coffin. Madeline's disease seems finally to have passed off.

Regarding his malady as "a constitutional and family evil" (III 280), the reclusive Roderick hesitantly admits that much of his grief stems from the illness and "the evidently approaching dissolution--of a tenderly beloved sister--his sole companion for long years--his last and only relative on earth" (III 281). A strange rapport appears to connect the kin. At his double's coffinside with the guest, the hypersensitive brother claims that in relation to his twin "sympathies of a scarcely intelligible nature had always existed between them" (III 289). Their shared family crypt seems to generate shared phantom effects. Concerning this palpable source of his woe, with an anticipatory orphanage and mourning the tearful host confesses that "'[h]er decease . . . would leave him (him the hopeless and the frail) the last of the ancient race of the Ushers'" (III 281).

With this citation the brother seems pronominally beside himself by speaking of himself as an object, and as if in response to his words of coming ruin, Madeline makes a spectral appearance. Astonished and oppressed with a dreadful

stupor as the woman passes from threshold to threshold, the narrator describes the scene: "While he spoke, the lady Madeline . . . passed slowly through a remote portion of the apartment, and, without having noticed my presence, disappeared." The narrator's gaze follows "her retreating steps," and after "a door, at length, closed upon her," his glance turns to the brother who had grotesquely covered his face with wan and emaciated fingers "through which trickled many passionate tears" (III 281). As the last remaining Ushers enact a cryptic drama, the orphaned twins passionately reflect as doubles.

In doubling Roderick's report of his sister's death, the incoherent guest unsettles his story's sequence of events. In the first account he claims: "on the closing in of the evening of my arrival at the house, she succumbed (as her brother told me at night with inexpressible agitation) to the prostrating power of the destroyer." Her succumbing might allude to a cataleptic seizure and thus account for the probability that the glimpse he caught of her in the studio would serve as his last view of the living lady. Yet the words also suggest her death. In the therapist's "earnest endeavours to alleviate the melancholy of my friend" (III 282), they then try to distract themselves from grief with music, painting, and reading.

The second account of Madeline's death occurs after a perused listing of "our" dreamy and phantasmic books, "books

which, for years, had formed no small portion of the mental existence of the invalid" (III 287). After poring (homonymic with the watery pouring and occasionally a spelling error in some Poe· texts) over the manual of a forgotten church that served as Roderick's chief delight, the <u>Vigiliæ Mortuorum secundum Chorum Ecclesiæ Maguntinæ</u>, the diagnostician observes:

> I could not help thinking of the wild ritual of this work, and of the probable influence upon the hypochondriac, when, one evening, having informed me abruptly that the lady Madeline was no more, he stated his intention of preserving her corpse for a fortnight, (previous to its final interment,) in one of the numerous vaults within the main walls of the building. (III 287)

While this cautious preservation against grave robbery protects her undissected body from "certain obtrusive and eager inquiries on the part of her medical men" (III 287-88). Roderick's abrupt information of Madeline's death follows a time-consuming reading of numerous phantasmic texts designed to relieve the sorrow already subsequent to the brother's having told the narrator that she had succumbed to the destroyer. With the apparently doubled news of Madeline's death, the host's focus on the influential and incunabular manual of vigils for the dead serves as a cryptic textual counterpoint to the guest's folly of the "Mad Trist." Not concerned just to respond to art, Roderick produces it.

An irredeemable sorrow saturates the imaged architecture of the brother's ideal art, which the narrator finds impossible to articulate. The art therapist paints and reads

with him in an endeavor to displace his host's grief after the first account of Madeline's death, and "as if in a dream," the attentive guest listens to the wild improvisations of his host's "speaking guitar" (III 282). The necrophiliac's ideas can not conceptualize the strangeness of Roderick's rhythmic productions echoing the family's losses. Although the narrator acknowledges Roderick's ideality, his keeping seems always connected to his "unceasing radiation of gloom" (III 282). If the guest observes the imaged limits that render his analysis unsolvable, the host's sensibilities for unconveyable mystery allow his imagination to articulate and chasten mourning into dispassionate poetry. The brother's aesthetic works serve as more than art therapy. As images of decayed houses and tombs, they inscribe his fearful passion and suggestively help stretch his bewildered dreams toward a particularly cryptic limit of conception.

A confusion of imagination and memory suspends and unsettles the distinctions between the allegedly real aspects of imaged fact and aesthetic dreams. The fanciful narrator and the ideal brother interpret their fictions into facts and/or facts into fictions. Bordering on infinite contextual regressions, the depictions of art within art help reflectively and ideally to upset any coherently posited sense of the familiar. Forcibly impressed by the words of "The Haunted Palace," the guest easily remembers them because as Roderick performs it, "in the under or mystic current of its

meaning, I fancied that I perceived, for the first time, a full consciousness on the part of Usher, of the tottering of his lofty reason upon her throne" (III 284). In his infected fancy the tale's narrator locates the poet's "full consciousness" by construing the mystic or under-current of the ballad as the brother's admission of his loss of reason or sanity, his madness.

From this poem the narrator becomes involved in that "train of thought" about Roderick's enchainment to "certain superstitious impressions to the dwelling which he tenanted" brought about by inorganized and vegetable sentience (III 281). Recalling the materialist narrator to the dreamy mental arrangement of his reflected images, these impressions unsettle empirical or medical distinctions trying to separate mental and material reflections. As the narrator relays, in the brother's "dim-remembered story" of the architectural fabric of his family's habitation, cryptically vague and "evil things, in robes of sorrow" entomb the glory of the idealized "monarch's high estate" (III 285).

With the tendency to conceal violations, a family secret may remain unknown to later generations, but even while unspoken, later infected generations may inherit and suffer the forcefully haunting effects of a violation. In the later generations an inherited sense of unspeakable loss develops in an embodied cryptic variation that remains unmourned, even when what hopelessly cries for mourning lies unknown and

unknowable. Thus, referring to the family patriarch, the brother asserts poetically: "'Ah, let us mourn, for never morrow / Shall dawn upon him, desolate!'" Although oppressed by a secret and anticipatory mourning, the host might not understand the precise nature of the evil. Then again, perhaps, Roderick does know its secret and actively conceals it while accepting its insoluble mystery.

Commenting on the facility of his host's impromptus, the narrator tries to attribute his host's ease with arranging particular aesthetic elements to "that intense mental collectedness and concentration . . . observable in particular moments of the highest artificial excitement" that he connects to Roderick's inconsistent and incoherent manner (III 284). Reversing indecision, this energetic concision results in an apparent ideal, improvisational keeping or facility with notes in music, strokes in painting, and words in rhymed verse. These images seem to open onto losses limiting the vacillating energies of the imagination. Just as a collateral arrangement of stones reduplicated in the waters might make possible the shadowy emergence of the house's vegetative sentience, so on reflection, artistic elements might also make possible a similar collateral arrangement or keeping of textual meaning.

While a supposedly sentient network spreads over these seemingly arrested elements to help vivify them, like the rhizomic network, a similar collaborative interpretation

reduplicates and overspreads the narrator's imaginative reading of Roderick's painted designs:

> From the paintings over which his elaborate fancy brooded, and which grew, touch by touch, into vagueness at which I shuddered knowing not why;--from these paintings (vivid as their images now are before me) I would in vain endeavour to educe more than a small portion which should lie within the compass of merely written words. By the utter simplicity, by the nakedness of his designs, he arrested and overawed attention. If ever mortal painted an idea, that mortal was Roderick Usher. For me at least--in the circumstances then surrounding me--there arose out of the pure abstractions which the hypochondriac contrived to throw upon his canvas, an intensity of intolerable awe, no shadow of which felt I ever yet in the contemplation of the certainly glowing yet too concrete reveries of Fuseli. (III 283)

For the entranced writer, Roderick as an ideal artist paints ideas through the simplicity and nakedness of arresting designs. An intensely intolerable awe arises out of this conceptual art, and touch by touch, this fearful wonder emerges into a strangely vivifying vagueness that causes the educing guest to shudder, not conceiving with assurance why he shudders. Stemming from an overpowering encryption, these heterogeneous images of ideas threaten a convergence of unity and nihility. The writer recognizes the limited compass of his imaged elements in trying to convey the haunted designs that arrested and overawed his attention.

Nevertheless, he tries to depict the ghostly strangeness of a painting of a fantastic subterranean vault: "One of the phantasmagoric conceptions of my friend, partaking not so rigidly of the spirit of abstraction, may be shadowed forth, although feebly, in words":

> A small picture presented the interior of an immensely
> long and rectangular vault or tunnel, with low walls,
> smooth, white, and without interruption or device.
> Certain accessory points of the design served well to
> convey the idea that this excavation lay at an exceeding
> depth below the surface of the earth. No outlet was
> observed in any portion of its vast extent, and no torch,
> or other artificial source of light was discernible; yet
> a flood of intense rays rolled throughout, and bathed the
> whole in a ghastly and inappropriate splendour. (III 283)

This abstract image of an empty white underground crypt lacks

any discernible light source, yet a flood of intense rays

rolls inexplicably within. With a fluid agitation and a

ghostly and unsuitable splendor, the vault appears self-

illuminated. As described, the cryptic design seems based on

a figure-ground illusion, which confuses an observer as to

whether the boundaries of the rectangle narrow toward or away

from the perceiver. Situated at a seemingly open-ended point

of view, a witness can not tell for certain if the rectangle

relieves or recedes. At once both near and far, the depicted

vastness without some interruption or device, some outlet,

could lie suspended above the surface of the earth as well as

below it. Yet without specifying precisely what accessory

points of design assure its situation, the narrator locates

the vault as buried at an exceeding depth. The limits

normally determining the embodiment's placement seem missing.

Perhaps Roderick supplies him with his intention, but the

guest does not convey this. Framing emptiness and confusion

near and far, in and out, and high and low, the indefinite

picture suggests the fluid topology of a vault's idea as

opposed to any specific vault.

Memorial Reading

Like Derrida's dizzying topology of inside and outside
endlessly switching places, the men's differing ideals and
embodiments infect and influence their reflective positions.
With his own medical and psychological suppositions, the
fanciful guest perceives the host's depressingly dreamy
keeping as a peculiarly specious totality after gazing at its
lost limit in the tarn.   Although infected by Roderick's
superstition, he mostly considers the inside from an outside
viewpoint and from diffused images of material embodiments.
Inside his beloved house, the imaginative host suffers with
his passionate keeping based on the mystery of an approaching
dissolution of his dwelling.   Although calling on outside
alleviation, he mostly considers the outside from an inside
viewpoint and from concentrated artistic designs of its
approaching end.   To the extent that inside and outside
converge from the double viewpoints through a call for relief,
an attempt at deliverance, and a recessive disappearance, the
writer's story attests to this commingling.   However, a total
confusion does not take place because of the differences in
the men's keepings, their memorial preservations.

Before the body of that silent witness on the threshold,
the men view the abject and wasted embodiment that reflects
their differing agitations, their differing crimes.   The first
feeble movements of the remains suspended in the crypt cause

the embodiment to vibrate. Straining architectonic ruin to its sensible limits of inconsistency and incoherence and seeking relief from their confused excitements, the oppressed narrator on the night of the storm reads to a fearful Roderick. Layers of reflections and echoes between the "Mad Trist" and the house haunt their interpretations. With a vertiginous dizziness, accusing the men, at best, for their hasty dispatch, the cryptofantasmatic Madeline emerges to precipitate a series of tumultuous collapses. From the unspoken knots of guilts the possibility of reading emerges.

In the vault the awed men's eyes can not rest long on the abject body of the woman taken for dead. The men's indeterminate involvements with what remains of Madeline have become lost in the story's indirectness. Supposedly speaking for his host and himself, the narrator gazes on the sister's face and notes that

> Our glances, however, rested not long upon the dead--for we could not regard her unawed. The disease which had thus entombed the lady in the maturity of youth, had left, as usual in all maladies of a strictly cataleptical character, the mockery of a faint blush upon the bosom and face, and that suspiciously lingering smile upon the lip so terrible in death. (III 289)

If the reader believes the text's words, the narrator and brother regard the sister as dead. If she lies dead, then her later arrival in the guestroom and, perhaps, her earlier appearance in her brother's studio function as spectral hauntings. Thus the oppressed and unnerved guest has become so infected that he might seem to share the family's phantom

effects. At coffinside the guest observes: "A striking similitude between the brother and sister now first arrested my attention" (III 288). Her admitted twin then adds cryptically "that sympathies of a scarcely intelligible nature had always existed between them" (III 289).

Drawing on Mary Douglas's work on pollution, impurity, and impropriety, Julia Kristeva writes in Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection that the waste of the corpse "no longer signifies anything" and before the arresting body one "behold[s] the breaking down of a world that has erased its borders" (4). Past the idealism of divinity and the positivism of science, she describes the dizzy fainting of the viewer's world before the unsettling and unbordered cadaver:

> The corpse, seen without God and outside of science, is the utmost abjection. It is death infecting life. Abject. It is something rejected from which one does not part, from which one does not protect oneself as from an object. Imaginary uncanniness and real threat, it beckons to us and ends up engulfing us. (4)

On reflection, the narcissistic readers witness the erasure of an inescapable border. Done with notions of the real, the dead body lies indifferently past introjection and incorporation, past doubt and belief. Depicted through the cadaverous brother and the wasted, but blushing and smiling, sister, the undoing of these seemingly distinct and proper borders has already begun before their deaths and contaminates the purity of any distinction with impurity, the included with the excluded.

Madeline or her spectral image always appears at thresholds, either leaving or entering doors or lying between life or death. Although she oppresses the guest and the brother who loves her, included in the story she doubles the excluded and suspended reader in silently passing through the story. Doubling the twins who double for the reader, the guest writes not only for the dead, but to the dead. Abjection tends toward an always excessively violent loss. While the narrator ponders the features of catalepsy, her cryptic double senses that he can not part from her or survive without her. Shortly, past folly and futility, the reader too will no longer reflect on the textual remains.

On the face and bosom of the corpus a faint blush mocks the men, and on the lip lingers a terrible and suspicious smile. Perhaps she still lives. If so, their eyes never rested on the dead. While the therapist considers her catalepsy, the brother's cryptically sympathetic terror might stem from their shared fate. Knowing that she wastes away inert in her abeyance reflectively leaves him quavering in suspense.

The more skeptical reader may detect in the men's unresting glance an apparent distraction, a criminal discomfort. Untangling this knot of responsive trustworthiness belonging to no one in particular becomes problematic, but the story indicates some directions for the strands of accountability. Presumably, the narrator knows the

symptoms of catalepsy and seemingly stands guilty for prematurely entombing the lady. He should have responded cautiously to the signs of life fascinating him and checked his friend's haste.[5] Instead, he stands by, perhaps knowing or assuming that the medical men have attended to these details. He abets his host. Roderick may not know that his sister survives as he entombs her. Then too, he might.

Desiring alleviation and deliverance, the brother may precipitate their mutual end in a suicidal sacrifice. Abraham and Torok explain this dilemma:

> when the subject learns--through repetition of the earlier trauma--that he must attack his secret love, nothing remains for him but to carry his mourning fantasy to its conclusion: "If he who loves me has to lose me for good, he will not survive that loss." ("Introjection--Incorporation" 16)

Enacting the family's losses and anticipating the loss of his beloved sister, Roderick influenced by his guest may act to hasten the house's end by entombing his living sister. With their scarcely intelligible sympathies, the hypersensitive brother may hasten the final cure. Although at first hearing he might remain uncertain as to whether the exact source of the sounds came from the house or Madeline, among his last guilty words he confesses to his apprehensive and passive determination despite knowing that she lived: "'I heard her first feeble movements in the hollow coffin. I heard them--many, many days ago--yet I dared not--I dared not speak!'" (Harrison III 296).

Not only does he not speak, he does not act. This fated cure continues a familial inheritance reaching past the twins' narcissisms toward the abject evil of the crypt. Because she knows him and he knows her through long dwelling together, the brother believes that Madeline's murderously angry blame stems from his hasty interment. He asks, "'Is she not hurrying to upbraid me for my haste?'" (III 296). Roderick's guilty haste fades into a murderous and suicidal delay while the fascinated narrator's culpable oversight might stem from a desire to escape a stuporous oppression. Their silent passivity does not absolve them from blame for haste and oversight, even as the necrophiliac and cryptic embodiments of their inherited crimes lie, in part, past their control and, perhaps, knowledge.

On the verge of a harmonic family tumult, whether as a ghost or an awakening cataleptic, the wasted body lodged in the crypt at first seems to move feebly. Its sounds echo and vibrate along a familial network of congruent images of fissured doubles running between the encrypted sister and, initially, the hypersensitive brother. These apparently subaudible resonances might spread through his embodied music, painting, and the "Haunted Palace." Gradually, reverberations increasingly disturb the men and build to contaminate and disrupt their reading of the "Mad Trist." Disembodying the house into the tarn, the sounds voice a watery shout and seem to cease at the story's end.

Dependent on the guest's necrophiliac fascination for its reflective images of embodiment, a cryptically secret legacy that arranges and engulfs the narrator's limited reminiscences seems to run forcefully between textually doubled thresholds that can suggestively convey phantom effects from a gap of loss and disappearance past their own keeping. Reflecting cryptic memories through more common, but limited, necrophiliac memories apparently facilitates the phantasmic fabric of conveyance. Registered through the familiar and familial layers of memorial architectonics, the gradually amplifying resonances seem to erupt from the vault's smothering silence and damp darkness, from a mysteriously secret oppression to a suggestive delivery. However, the resonances might just as well come from a reader's secret reflective endeavor to treat or deliver the embodiment. From its recessively encrypted textuality, this haunted architectonics might overspread and infect, as a double of the narrative, the reflective and collaborative reader.

To calm his hysterical friend on the night of the strange stormy whirlwind, the narrator paradoxically leads him "with a gentle violence, from the window to a seat" and reads to him from the "Mad Trist" of Sir Launcelot Canning (III 292). Aptly, "trist" plays with the meanings of meeting and sorrow. Strange reverberations from somewhere in the house echo and reflect the events read from the tale. Rocking constantly and uniformly to and fro, gibbering inaudibly, and dropping his

head to his breast, the brother offers to the closely bent
guest his interpretation of the events echoing to the
story:

> "Ethelred--ha! ha!--the breaking of the hermit's door,
> and the death-cry of the dragon, and the clangour of the
> shield!--say, rather, the rending of her coffin, and the
> grating of the iron hinges of her prison, and her
> struggles within the coppered archway of the vault!" (III
> 296)

At first doubtfully dismissing the gradually increasing noises
as coincidences of the storm, when the counterparts to his
reading become more striking, the unnerved narrator feels a
fancifully conjured terror and wonder, a "wild amazement."
Oppressed by "a thousand conflicting sensations" and despite
the "strange alteration" in Roderick's regressing demeanor,
the therapist asserts, "I still retained sufficient presence
of mind to avoid exciting, by any observation, the sensitive
nervousness of my companion." In an advanced denial concerning
his hypersensitive host, the guest affirms, "I was by no means
certain that he had noticed the sounds in question" (III 294).

Three interruptions occur during the guest's reading: the
first after Ethelred forcefully breaks a door to gain entry to
the maliceful hermit's dwelling, the second after Ethelred
maces the dragon's head and the beast utters its death shriek,
and last after the rewarding shield falls with a loud ring at
the enchantment-breaking hero's feet. These sections suggest
the phases of reading; the perceptive reader opens the door of
the text, falls in with its conflict, and suffers with its
currents of unattainability. Significantly, Ethelred does not

grasp the conqueror's shield. Responding as if to a criminal violation, both context and text vibrate with a disturbed and disturbing aggressive violence. Attending to a superficial symmetry the doubting and reflective narrator attempts to infer the physical counterparts of the sounds while the ideal artist seems to educe the mournful principle organizing them. As the phantasmic Madeline approaches accusingly, the poetic critic turns his chair to face the threshold. Arrested, the victimized victimizers await and suffer the approach of their haunting victim.

Influenced through contextually commingled alleviations and infections, the men's desires and criminalities border on indistinct shadows. Compelled to bear and suffer uncertainties, the fearful men respond to this gradually emerging revenant by feeling oppressed or by wavering from side to side. As the abject erupts from the damp crypt and through the arched way, the men's mournful burden interrupts their double reading of the "Mad Trist" before Ethelred can obtain the conqueror's shield and disrupts their dreams with unobtainable limits. As an Usher and a double, Madeline does not simply oppose or deflate the men's material and spiritual values and effects (the men do this themselves), but her indistinctness marks their situations in the orphanage where they remain. Gazing on this unreadable and haunted suspension, the strangely narcissistic reader imagines his or her dreams and values and effects his or her own longing and

crimes. Whether credible or incredible, this ghostly suspension appears to indicate the suggestive negativity that accompanies and engulfs every contextual reflection and embodiment. Accepting this doubtful inheritance from the dead or not, this dilemma of heterogeneous losses forces the reader to draw on their own strange resistances.

Causing the dwelling to rush asunder and collapse, the crypt ejects its incorporated violence and loss. Madeline's or her specter's entrance allows for a description of the bedroom door: "the huge antique panels . . . threw slowly back, upon the instant, their ponderous and ebony jaws" (III 296). The door's fatal orality spews Madeline forth from their ancient panels into the scene. Unassimilatable and indigestible, she remains indistinct, indeterminate, and improper. As a ghostly remainder violently receiving, accompanying, and repelling the intrusive endeavors at textual reflection, between incorporation and introjection, credence and doubt, through layered inheritances her abject and wasted form resistantly haunts sense and renders it senseless. If, accepting an alleviation provided by the narrator, the brother reflectively enables the relieving disappearance of his twin and, thus, their dwelling, then infected by his friend's cryptic superstitions, the guest might also anticipate a resonant collapse of his own keeping.

As the twins collapse on the bedroom floor, the oppressed narrator escapes the habitation as Madeline escaped from her

vault. When the bloody sister arrives in the guestroom and falls on her brother, the infected narrator anticipates an unhomely result and acts quickly: "From that chamber, and from that mansion, I fled aghast" (III 297). Arising from ruin and loss past perceptive and conceptive thresholds, the reflective and ideal meanings of both host and guest resolve into mystery and nothingness. Disembodying and rushing apart, the lofty arrangement of stones crumbles violently into the tarn with a watery shout of a heterogeneous voice. Then past the tale's senseless ruin, its survival depends on the reader's currents of memory or forgetting. Engulfing the narrator and his story, only loss remains.

The sister's emergence from the donjon-keep remains disturbing. Gradually struggling up from where she has been put by the positive scientist and her familial protector, she silently marks differences arising between heterogenous doubles and makes a memorial appearance. In every regard and respect, her memory haunts and suspends text and context. Whether she serves as object or design of the story and/or whether she supports it or depends on it remain(s) undecidable, but as an embodied articulation of doubt and grief, Madeline interrupts and disrupts endeavors to maintain coherence and constancy, including those of the collusive reader. Her uncertain loss makes apparent the ghostly inheritances and the suspended assumptions of memory. As such, she reflects the suggestions of negativity and indicates

the losses past the fantasies appropriated by mourning and skepticism.

Tending toward apparent never-ending losses, her monumental effects influence the placement of memory, material and spiritual keepings, and the possibilities of reading. She marks an image of the losses toward which doubles strangely tend.

Although some memories appear placeable in context, ultimately memories, like dreams, seem unlocalizable. Unsettling and unsettled, memory remains uncertain and neither simply in nor out of any (con)text, but in and out of both. Thus, finally, memory eludes possession and attainment. Like the narrator who finds the familiar unfamiliar, the inability of memory to stay constant or consistent adds a suspended and haunting strangeness to the memorable. While contextually a total confusion of memories appears impossible, according to Poe, imaginative arrangements of memorials accompanied by strange losses facilitate the phantasmic conveyance of the suggestive more than transparent designs. Keepings and readings follow suit. As will appear, in "Morella" this impenetrably strange loss effects self-identity and in "Eleonora" the memory of the beloved.

In "The Fall of the House of Usher" the men reflect a particular structuring of doubles: allegedly, the ideal, imaginative spirit and the dreamy, fanciful materialist. They both affirm and assert ideals that seem to fail to reach

attainment. With his cherished family values, Roderick discovers a concentrated cryptic collapse, and with his therapeutic interests in mental health, the narrator observes a necrophiliac, diffused insolubility. The brother seems haunted by familial ghosts, and with a dissecting gaze, the narrator seems in suspense over what to make of these twins bordering on death. Roderick's superstitions infect the narrator, and the art therapist facilitates Roderick's distractions. The artist articulates a wild and bewildering suggestiveness in his constructions, and the narrator recounts his case studies, although he appears at a loss as to what they might mean. Even the men's reading preferences reflect these tendencies. Roderick lingers over particular phantasmic texts and prefers a vigil for the dead; the narrator's textual background appears through his general familiarity with the history of mental disorder. When they share the only "purely fictional" romance, as Riddel put it, Madeline interrupts their suffering with her haunting suspension. In their attempts to alleviate and deliver, the men may share an unspeakable crime, one that leads to their encounter with abject remains. At best, their violent excesses suggest a haste and oversight in dealing with the constitutional malady and, at worst, a murderous aggression. In regarding the always improper corpse without boundaries, they gaze on their own strange values and assumptions. Roderick tends toward a cryptic faith and mourning; the narrator tends toward a

necrophiliac doubt and skepticism. Although they infect and influence each other, Madeline's suggestions of a negativity draw them toward a whirlwind of seemingly never-ending losses.

From the vibratory suggestions of the negative stem the forces that structure cryptic imaginations and necrophiliac fancies. Derived from mournful and doubtful legacies, every regard and reading enfolds and becomes enfolded between the phantasmic forces and values of incorporatively assumed hypotheses, dizzying introjections, and circular regressions. By doubling narration, reading becomes a suspension, a ghost effect. Emerging from the orphanage past the dilemmas of hope and fear, of belief and disbelief, reading becomes possible when a reader, suspended between a reflected and reflective embodiment, engages his or her haunting memories and dreams in order to reflect on a given reflective and, hopefully, reflected embodiment.

Subject to the vacillations of the imagination as directed by the will, readings imply ethical responsibilities. As memory orients the reflective treatments of textual regard, a focused stress on the suffering of mourning and the omissions, incoherences, and inconsistencies detected by skepticism should lead to different, if, perhaps, more melancholic, views of reader identifications. Situated between a cryptic delight or a therapeutic folly, attention to the intrusive meanings of reading might turn with a more telepathic and telesthetic sensitivity to the ghostly keepings

of lost inheritances embodied in fabrications. Within the
contexts of grief and doubt, an accepting openness to the
violences, crimes, desires, secrets, and the indefinitenesses
found in images and imaginations might help reduce the
intrusive pains of oppressions and repressions. At least, an
attempt to consider the mourning and doubt accompanying
conveyances might sketch the differently arranged domains of
reflections.   Admitting the absolute impossibility of
conceiving the strange ghastliness of any final meaning, such
approaches and directions to variously haunted embodiments and
losses remain open to the possibilities of cryptic and
necrophiliac readings.

Notes

1. At the beginning of <u>The Treatise of Human Nature</u>, the
skeptical Hume tries to separate the doubling between ideas
and impressions:

> The first circumstance, that strikes my eye, is the great
> resemblance betwixt our impressions and ideas in every
> other particular, except their degree of force and
> vivacity. The one seems to be in a manner the reflection
> of the other; so that all the perceptions of the mind are
> double, and appear both as impressions and ideas. (11)

For Hume a mental resemblance appears with a double tendency
toward impressions of sensations, passions, and emotions and
ideas of thoughts and reasons, but whether based on memory or
the imagination, liveliness or force of images opens up the
appearances of the world and mind to the soul. In developing
"the necessity of the finite's departure from the eternal" in
Schelling's <u>Bruno</u> (158), the idealistic Bruno finds, not only
"that gravity's function is to ceaselessly assimilate
difference into universal indifference" (166), but also a
doubled soul:

> Therefore when you suppose that infinite cognition, the
> infinite and immortal idea of all things, actually

exists, you directly posit once again the opposition of
difference and indifference, for actual existence cannot
be established except in connection to an individual
thing; if you posit the existence of infinite cognition
as the soul of one particular body, then you are positing
a double soul, as it were, one soul embracing the
[limited] [brackets appear in the text] actuality of
infinite thought, the other soul its infinite
possibility. (179)

Between a limited actuality and infinite possibility, between
difference and indifference, the double soul becomes
individually embodied through an infinite cognition.

Approaching both sides of projective splitting, the
included heroic and the excluded diabolic, Otto Rank in The
Double implicates guilt, constancy, and death with doubling in
a manner recalling Poe's tendency toward unity and nihility:

The most prominent symptom of the forms which the double
takes is a powerful consciousness of guilt which forces
the hero no longer to accept the responsibility for
certain actions of his ego, but to place it upon another
ego, a double, who is either personified by the devil
himself or is created by making a diabolical pact
. . . . As Freud has demonstrated, this awareness of
guilt, having various sources, measures on the one hand,
the distance between the ego-ideal and the attained
reality; on the other, it is nourished by a powerful fear
of death and creates strong tendencies toward self-
punishment, which also imply suicide. (76-77)

Trying to separate the inside from the out, Rank maintains
that these defensive mirrorings "in which the uncanny double
is clearly an independent and visible cleavage of the ego
(shadow, reflection)--are different from those actual figures
of the double who confront each other as real and physical
persons of unusual external similarity" (12). Yet
ambivalently, both of these manifestations lead back to a
narcissism that conjoins love and death. Freud too wrestled
to distinguish between two narcissisms, the primary and the
secondary.

2. Aware of the impact of skepticism, Kennedy's Poe, Death,
and the Life of Writing attends to the fetishistic economy of
death in Poe's writings. Kennedy writes the following:

If death entered writing first as a thematic fetish, then
as a primal impulse for life writing, and then as the
ground of self-conscious textuality, it ultimately
penetrated to the level of language itself, as philosophy
began to deconstruct its own linguistic premises in a
radical rethinking of the way that verbal signs relate to

truth. Whether the new death evoked a questioning of metaphysics, or whether this questioning itself contributed to the ascendancy of death, we can observe inchoately in Poe and manifestly in modern writers and theorists the impact of both phenomena: the sense of a language which has been emptied, hollowed out, encrypted. That which guaranteed the truth of language, an originary Logos, has been through the unfolding of time lost, obscured, and invalidated. This displacement has likewise forced the human subject to confront the problem of death nakedly, to live (as Sartre has said) without appeal. . . . In modern postmetaphysics, writing is merely the trace of a lost presence and wholeness; it is, Derrida remarks, a system of differences which would be inconceivable "without the nonpresence of the other inscribed within the sense of the present, without the relationship with death as the concrete structure of the living presence" [Of Grammatology 71]. At once more pervasive and more subtle than any other symptom of death's intrusion into writing, this abyss between the graphic sign and its referent, between world and word, discloses the provisionality of linguistic formulations purporting to convey truth. (190-191)

While I would quibble with the incipient role of questioning in Poe's writing, I agree that when treated as a fetish, death has led to an unsettling of the metaphysics of presence upon which speech, writing, self-consciousness, and truth have rested. By joining a skeptical critical approach to the observable effects of the remains of death, Poe texts play, I suspect, a role in reassessing ideality. However, using any notion of a fetish to approach the always open and inessential notion of death invites a discontinuation of the attempt to get at the hypotheses upon which ideal presences rest. This happens because the ideality, a connective quality and not a thing, gets reified and distributed between the desire of the subject and the fascination of the object. Poe's view of death has more implications for conceptualization than my thesis can trace here. Nevertheless, Kennedy situates the cultural aspects of death found in Poe texts and develops many significant postmodern and deconstructive implications of Poe's writings.

3. In a review of R. H. Horne's Orion, the critical Poe addresses the problem of trying to convey ideas that appear to exceed the capacity of ordinary language. In a seemingly scornful analogy to the vastness of thumb sucking, he admits a parallel between the childish oral dependency and such spiritually visionary, orphic, and prophetic ideas. Because he also finds himself pressed against the proper limits of acceptable behavior and articulation, his hope for the possibility of the needed comprehension "by the mass of common

humanity" becomes particularly important (XI 252). Thus, he accuses the seer of failure to "employ those forms of speech which are the best adapted to further his object" (XI 252):

> But to all this the Orphicist thus replies: "I am a SEER. My IDEA--the idea which by providence I am especially commissioned to evolve--is one so vast--so novel--that ordinary words, in ordinary collocations, will be insufficient for its comfortable evolution." Very true. We grant the vastness of the IDEA--it is manifested in the sucking of the thumb--but, then, if _ordinary_ language be insufficient--ordinary language which men understand-- _a fortiori_ will be insufficient that inordinate language which no man has _ever_ understood, and which any well-educated baboon would blush in being accused of understanding. The "SEER," therefore, has no resource but to oblige mankind by holding his tongue, and suffering his IDEA to remain quietly "unevolved," until some mesmeric mode of intercommunication shall be invented, whereby the antipodal brains of the SEER and the man of Common Sense shall be brought into the necessary _rapport_. (XI 252-53)

As a basis for understanding, this proffered hope of hypnotic rapport brings together the languages and ideas of common sense and the visionary effects Poe's notion of the imaginative will.

4.   In translating Fredrick Schelling's _Bruno or on the Natural and the Divine Principle of Things_ (1802), Michael G. Vater considers Schelling's image of the inverted reflection in a pool of water: "This is the first mention, as far as I know, of the inverted world concept or the idea of standing reality on its head, the polemical tool widely employed by Hegel, Feuerbach, and Marx" (n. 39 238). Vater further adds "the mature Hegel will make inversion fundamental to the conceptual grasp of reality." Testing some conceptual limits of his ideas in "The Fall of the House of Usher," the narrator explicitly mentions "the remodelled and inverted images" reflected in the tarn outside the house (Harrison III 274). As Schelling's passage deals with the idea, reflection, limits, possibility, actuality, and negation, Bruno's words bear some scrutiny:

> is it not evident that to finite cognition, unity means only endless possibility, while multiplicity comprises the actuality of things? And further, that in unbounded reality we see only the infinite possibility of all actuality, while we perceive its actualization in the limit or boundary? Within the sphere of finite conception, therefore, negation turns into positing and positing becomes negation! This happens to such an

> extent that the finite cognition takes 'substance,' that
> which is believed to be the essential element of things,
> to mean the bare possibility of a being, while it accepts
> what is incidental, which is termed 'the accidents,' as
> the being's realized actuality. In short, it we compare
> finite understanding to the supreme idea and to the way
> that all things have their being therein, it looks like
> everything is upside down, almost like the things you see
> reflected in a pool of water. (143-44)

For the finite mind, unity remains elusively unperceivable and
appears only as the faint possibility of things; whereas,
heterogeneous multiplicity makes up the perceivable. The
limits or thresholds of perceptive reflections delimit the
locus of exchange between the posited and the negative, the
speculative location that converts nothing into something.
The function of memory for cognition becomes critical at this
juncture. It seems that the essential operates with the
haunting of the "bare possibility" of entity; whereas, the
accidental and the incidental depend on the structuring limit
defined by this unperceivable "bare possibility." Falling back
on the memorial perception of comparison, the idealist tries
to juxtapose the unperceivable "supreme idea" and the vast
heterogeneity of all things with finite understanding by
appealing to the inverted images reflected in a tarn.
Schelling qualifies the access to the supreme idea as a
belief. While Poe tracks down the limits of the posited
arising from nothingness, his emphasis remains materially on
the observable because his narrator assumes a material
embodiment for reflecting. He does conjecture as to the ideal
spiritual beliefs of some of his characters, but at the limit
their beliefs appear to vanish into unreadable deaths or
dreams. Poe's texts seem to acknowledge that an approach to
perceptual limits requires a memorially fideistic belief that
for its recognition and understanding operates under the
possibility of erasure or negation.

5. Although a similar development appears in Aries' treatment
of the history of death in western culture, the analytic view
of cadavers built into modern medical science through anatomy
gets expressed by Michel Foucault in The Birth of the Clinic:

> Life, disease, and death now form a technical and
> conceptual trinity. The continuity of the age-old
> beliefs that placed the threat of disease in life and the
> approaching presence of death in disease is broken; in
> its place is articulated a triangular figure the summit
> of which is defined by death. It is from the height of
> death that one can see and analyse organic dependences
> and pathological sequences. Instead of being what it had
> so long been, the night in which life disappeared, in
> which even the disease becomes blurred, it is now endowed

with that great power of elucidation that dominates and
reveals both the space of the organism and the time of
the disease. . . . Death is the great analyst that shows
the connexions by unfolding them, and bursts open the
wonders of genesis in the rigour of decomposition: and
the word decomposition must be allowed to stagger under
the weight of its meaning. Analysis, the philosophy of
elements and their laws, meets its death in what it had
vainly sought in mathematics, chemistry, and even
language: an unsupersedable model, prescribed by nature;
it is on this great example that the medical gaze will
now rest. It is no longer that of a living eye, but the
gaze of an eye that has seen death--a great white eye
that unties the knot of life. (144)

Through numerous vivisections of living bodies and dissections
of dead corpses, positive, empirical science through
pathological anatomy stabilized and normalized death as the
basis for its physical understandings of life and disease.
Although these practices terrified and horrified many, they
paved the way for the so-called progress and benefits of
medical science. The increasingly technical and conceptual
focus on the material aspects of death tended to marginalize
and repress non-material views. Even Freud the modern analyst
of the self and the psyche, both pathological and normative,
cherished the dream of founding his "science" on anatomy. As
a double of the sinister and cunning "physician of the
family," the therapist casts his glance too on the matter of
the Ushers' cases.

CHAPTER 4
VIOLENCES OF FEAR AND HOPE

Haunting Feelings

Then, sadder, and lonelier, and more unbelieving
than any of these, Edgar Poe came to sound the very
depths of the abyss. The unrest and faithlessness
of the age culminated in him. Nothing so solitary,
nothing so hopeless, nothing so desolate as his
spirit in its darker moods has been instanced in
the literary history of the nineteenth century.
            --Sarah Whitman, Edgar Poe and His Critics

[Poe] wanted one [ver]y essential quality, [the]
manliness to realize his own Ideal. . . .   [H]e
required just that crowning quality which [w]as the
glory   of   both   those   great   men   [Plato   and
Pythagoras]--the power [to] live above temptation
--to be a man, yet despise [all] that was not
manly--to live in the world yet live above the
world. . . .   In short, he subordinated his mind
[to] his body. Having inverted the Pyramid of his
greatness which God had placed upon his base, there
was nothing left him but to fall.
            --Thomas Holley Chivers, Chivers' Life of Poe

With this map of some designs and contours that

architectonically structure the suspended ghosts of reading

ushered into place, consideration can turn to the excessively

violent   affects   and   effects   emerging   from   cryptic

incorporations and necrophiliac introjections and between

doubly hypothetical circularities and regressions.   With the

concurrence of mourning's endeavors to address the losses of

constancy and doubt's attempts to deal with the losses of

consistency and coherence, a memorial repression and oppression against the suspended ghosts of the remains arrives in the names of the proper, propriety, and property. With the ghastly uncertainty derived from readings' suspended ghost effects and the tendencies of psychoanalysis to treat rationalizations as affective elaborations and of skepticism to regard thoughts as feelings, the violence of hope and fear as emotional responses to the dilemmas of uncertainty require attention before considering Poe's ethics.

"The Fall of the House of Usher" resonates with the excessive violence appearing in many Poe stories. With the loss of any distinctly determinate boundaries, any firm center gets lost, and thus as an exorbitancy or excess accompanies any endeavor, any effort becomes violent. Problematizing the situation of the proper, the dreamy convictions and committed excesses force the doubly suspended characters toward seemingly strange desires and thoughts, often accompanied by telesthetic ghost effects. If not for the familiar problems of how to situate trust and reliability and the terrible and sometimes horrifying effects of their misplacements, these macabre tales might reduce to arcane intellectual and peculiar emotional exercises. But the difficulties with the proper determination of sanity and rationality do not vanish so easily.

Poe's cosmology, criticisms, and tales embody and reflect a grave encounter with the apparently ageless problems of

death, mourning, and doubt. While his stories address personal violence, such as murder and domestic abuse, his cosmology and criticisms use the materially sensible and spiritually psychic wings of skepticism and the ideals of empiricism and transcendentalism to regard the more general forces and values structuring appearances. Reflecting a fideistic skepticism, Poe's passionate attempts to track down the ultimate forces through heterogeneity lead him to the shadowy recesses of the indistinct, the inconceivable, and the impossible; and at the vacillating limit past which the irreducibly doubled forces of attraction and repulsion disappear, he found the distinction between his memories and dreams strangely unsettled, his values and his passions exchanging places.

Finding the secret of the proper lost and, thus, heterogeneity enfolded in an always excessive violence, Poe's texts suggest that, although haunted by strange, undecidable interruptions, for any inherited context an ethics of effect remains possible. Reflectively embodied in Roderick's hasty oversight and concern, as opposed to a more hesitant care, this memorial ethics calls for decisions responsive to contextual differences. Reflected through attitudes, the confident adoption of particular passions and values when combined with force can have powerful effects on surrounding entities, embodiments, and reflections. This ethics requires an undecidability between attraction and repulsion, hope and

fear,[1] before adopting any responsive decision, if with its compelling contextual inheritance such decision even remains possible. Thus regarded, Poe's stories serve to suggest that particular values and powers can lead differentially to evilly deformed or beautiful effects.

Confronting the indistinct shadows of death and having contrasting ethical effects, "Morella" and "Eleonora" consider some of the family violences stemming from different strategies of concentration and diffusion. Each narrator tells of his personal involvements with two women. Following on an adoption of an always excessive strategy, the haunting responses of mourning and doubt surrounding the death of the first woman influence the narrator's relation with the second woman. Each tale has its own haunting <u>in articulo mortis</u>. Serving as foils surviving the enigmatic losses of death, the empiricist of "Morella" deals with the fearful propensity of intellectual knowledge to condemn and betray, and the fanciful writer of "Eleonora" deals with the hopeful tendency of emotional passion to trust and forgive. In the Ushers' tale, the host and the guest, the reading and the reader, exchange places through reflective doublings. So too in these tales, an assumption of constancy, a positing and suspension of judgment, and a collusive overlooking of criminal offenses may take place reflectively within differentiated fields of condonation and conviction, giving and taking, and trust and

betrayal. Thus, the reader becomes ethically implicated by reading.

In order to consider the tales' embodiments, deaths, and violences, Poe's cosmological ontology of loss must receive attention. This calls for a consideration of attraction and repulsion in relation to heterogeneous sentience and values in order to account for Poe's cosmology of mourning and doubt. A conflation between memories and dreams serves as the basic element for sentience. As such, it enfolds all mental realms and permeates all responses. After a brief look at some ethical implications involving the cosmological forces and the mental realms, the balance of the chapter considers in "Morella" and "Eleonora" the ghostly role of dreams and memories in morally shaping the domestic dilemmas that emerge from the excessive violence of adopting particular intellectual and emotional values and forces in relation to embodiment.

A Lost and Ghostly Cosmology

Poe sees that collocated with a gravitational materiality of sensible textualities, an electrical ether serves coincidentally and reciprocally to develop and manifest an accompanying spirit from which animation, consciousness, and ghost effects emerge. On responsive reflection, the mental realms of truth, beauty, and morals arise from the inheritances of heterogeneous and reciprocal adaptations

between matter and spirit, this doubled singularity. Echoing

Roderick's theories of vegetable sentience, of entity becoming

identity, the cosmologist of <u>Eureka</u> writes:

> I have already alluded to that absolute <u>reciprocity of adaptation</u> which is the idiosyncrasy of the divine Art --stamping it as divine. Up to this point of our reflections, we have been regarding the electrical influence as a something by dint of whose repulsion alone Matter is enabled to exist in that state of diffusion demanded for the fulfillment of its purposes:--so far, in a word, we have been considering the influence in question as ordained for Matter's sake--to subserve the objects of matter. With a perfectly legitimate reciprocity, we are now permitted to look at Matter, as created <u>solely for the sake of this influence</u>--solely to serve the objects of this spiritual Ether. Through the aid--by the means--through the agency of Matter, and by dint of its heterogeneity--is this Ether manifested--is <u>spirit individualized</u>. It is merely in the development of this Ether, through heterogenity, that particular masses of Matter become animate--sensitive--and in ratio of their heterogeneity;--some reaching a degree of sensitiveness involving what we call <u>thought</u> and thus attaining Conscious Intelligence. (XVI 308-9)

Thus, including demons and angels, all sentient

consciousnesses function medially and heterogeneously through

matter (see VI 143). This also applies to animal sentience.[2]

Matter tending toward an unperceivable unity and spirit

tending toward an unperceivable diffusion constrain and

manifest individualized sensitivities with their sentimental

feelings and sentient thoughts. Through this ghostly

solidarity, only an envisioned heart divine reserves the

prerogative of the power to will absolute perfection and

unity, but to heterogeneously limited witnesses sensing the

effects of these ultimately unperceived forces through

collocated images, any imaginable effort to grasp or account

for these forces becomes lost in foggy and shadowy dreams. Poe accepts that his heterogeneously mediated cosmology lies ultimately in the ruins of uncertainty.

Intuiting by empirical analogy that the gravitational, concentrated unity and nihility would dominate the electrical, diffused heterogenity, Poe admits that the ultimate sympathy and compatibility between the forces of attraction and repulsion remain indeterminate and incomprehensible: "The conditions here to be reconciled are difficult indeed:--we cannot even comprehend the possibility of their conciliation; --nevertheless, the apparent impossibility is brilliantly suggestive" (XVI 211). This double incomprehensibility contributes an indeterminably strange gap or suspension that accompanies the alleged constancy of meaning through its lack of closure, through effects of mourning and doubt. Poe's illuminating faith and hope in a divine unity and nihility intuit a sameness, not unlike the comparative impossibilities of conception he criticizes, yet however brilliantly suggestive, his incredible fancy of attraction and repulsion acknowledges its undecidable irreconcilability. Analogously and reciprocally adapted, like death, attraction and repulsion draw sentiences to an unknowable end. Turning to the possibly shared sensitivities of fellow dreamers, Poe in the preface to Eureka seeks acceptance for his vision by appealing to their resonating loves, but perhaps love too mirrors a similar irreconcilable dilemma.

Because delimited perception requires both conditions singularly, "attraction and repulsion are the sole properties through which we perceive the Universe" (XVI 214), the estranged heterogeneities of matter and spirit operate together with irreducibly disruptive gaps, unfamiliar concentrations and diffusions that obscure the same with perceivable, but ultimately unfounded, differences. Haunting and haunted by the boundaries of their disappearance, attraction and repulsion function as hypnotically fascinating and riveting dream forces from which possibilities emerge. Rupturing and eating at the self-enclosure of identity and all ideal anticipations and memories, a repressed phantasm supplements the dream of union with a different impossibility, heterogeneous losses extending without end past the limits of perception: "the appetite for Unity among the atoms is doomed to be satisfied never" (XVI 211). Although Poe favors the dream of unity, the possibility of an unending loss haunts his texts with an obsessive mourning and doubt. With concentrated and diffused violences, imaginative and fanciful wills respond to their ghostly inheritances with passionate longings situated reciprocally, but undecidably, between resistances and acceptances tending toward loss. A more or less excessively exaggerated sensitivity to doubt and mourning follows any decisively dreamy affirmation.

Finding the reconciliation of attraction and repulsion difficult, indeed impossible, to conceive, but brilliantly

suggestive, the intuitive ontologist of <u>Eureka</u> indicates that heterogeneous human sentience can ultimately consider neither:

> The <u>design</u> of the repulsion--the necessity for its existence--I have endeavored to show; but from all attempt at investigating its nature have religiously abstained; this on account of an intuitive conviction that the principle at issue is strictly spiritual--lies in a recess impervious to our present understanding--lies involved in a consideration of what now--in our human state--is <u>not</u> to be considered--in a consideration of <u>spirit in itself</u>. I feel, in a word, that here the God has interposed, and here only, because here and here only the knot demanded the interposition of the God. (XVI 212)

This vestigial recess marks a missing gap or suspension that limits and haunts Poe's works as a resonating centrality. Mirroring the unperceivable collapse of matter, this loss of spiritual consideration diffuses his ontology and cosmology toward an unsettling and uncertain mourning, doubt, and loss. With the ultimate lack of proof, demonstration, or consideration, any theological dogma or reasoned belief falls into inconsistency at this recessive knot/not of irreconcilable indeterminables, and although difference requires something like a faith in repulsion and attraction for any meaningful possibility, Poe's religious abstinence moves strangely toward both irreverent trust and reverent doubt. Although Poe claims "[t]hat Nature and the God of Nature are distinct, no thinking being can long doubt," his notion that god's unity gets perceived as a material nihility draws his fideism back toward a skeptical limit. Virtually simulating and dissimulating a certain uncertainty, this interposition excessively interrupts apparently constant

positions with incoherent vacillations and seemingly confident reflections with unsettled waverings.

From this embodied and reflective dilemma, uncertainties with their interruptive discontinuances haunt and torment those who insist persistently or religiously on the proper or improper. With this boundary ultimately impervious to imaginations or understandings, to possible considerations or comprehensions, mourning and doubt draws any dreams of meaning or supposition toward recessive impossibility. Both as an acceptance and a resistance, this vacillating boundary of inherited images and memories holds in place indistinctly the imagined dream of unity and its accompanying interruptions of nihility. This impervious recession situates Poe's fideistic skepticism and his cosmology of mourning.

Materially following the analogy of the stronger physical force, according to Poe, gravity will overwhelm spiritual electricity, "the final globe of globes will instantaneously disappear," and no relation, attractive or repulsive, will remain with the collective unity of "Matter without Matter" (XVI 310-11). Thus, tending toward its unlocatable center and bordering its own disappearance, the collective pressure of matter will expel the spiritual ether:

> In sinking into Unity, it will sink at once into that Nothingness which, to all Finite Perception, Unity must be--into that Material Nihility from which alone we can conceive it to have been evoked--to have been <u>created</u> by the Volition of God. (XVI 311)

Thus, all death-bound sensitivities and sentiences, emotional or intellectual, tend toward the inconsiderable and incomprehensible, but ultimate, unity and nothingness. Tending toward an inconceivable assumption of constancy, this extension of Poe's critique of infinity brackets and unsettles the privileged certainties of either matter and spirit, fact and fiction, or the different and the same. Lacking the possibility of any ultimate meaning, indeterminate uncertainty gets assimilated within and without any identity or relations. In a note to <u>Eureka</u>, the ontologist offers the dying what might seem a consolation:

> The pain of the consideration that we shall lose our individual identity, ceases at once when we further reflect that the process, as above described, is, neither more nor less than that of the absorption, by each individual intelligence, of all other intelligences (that is, of the Universe) into its own. That God may be all in all, each must become God. (XVI 336)

As the deathbound get digested by indistinct forces, this incorporative and introjective assimilation might not provide much comfort for individuals longing for a personal immortality or a final disappearance, nor will it stanch painful reflections on the loss of the self. In this all in all, not even the irreconcilable indistinctnesses of ghostly dreams remain. Whatever god might keep within heterogeneous differences remains unknowable, unperceivable, and inconceivable. Perhaps a faith in god's will may posit or believe in creative movements past this perceptive and conceptive limit, but conjecturally at least, the possibility

of a never-ending recessive loss always accompanies such a dream.

The Dreams of Memory

Memory occupies a special place in Poe's vision. Interchangeable with dreams and intuitions, it engages attraction and diffusion. Toward the end of _Eureka_ Poe acknowledges this dependence: "The _phænomena_ on which our conclusions must at this point depend, are merely spiritual shadows, but not the less thoroughly substantial" (XVI 311). At once substantial and shadowy, the assumed conveyance from substantive dreams to shadowy memories or from shadowy dreams to substantial memories marks both a manifest recession and a recession of the manifest, an apparent loss and a loss of the apparent. Erasing what it indites, this haunted and haunting circularity attempts to incorporate the introjective and introject the incorporative, to hypothesize doubt and doubt hypothesis. Explaining the effects of this conveyance, Poe then writes:

> We walk about, amid the destinies of our world-existence, encompassed by the dim but ever present _memories_ of a Destiny more vast--very distant in the by-gone time, and infinitely awful.
> We live out a Youth peculiarly haunted by such dreams; yet never mistaking them for dreams. As Memories we _know_ them. _During our Youth_ the distinction is too clear to deceive us even for a moment. (XVI 311-12)

Seemingly more than dreams, the peculiarly haunted dreams by which youth lives appear as ever present memories opened to the vast, distant, and infinitely awful. Somewhat akin to

Schelling's encounter with the infinite, this strange conversion of memories into haunted dreams remains supposedly incontrovertible. Despite a passionate insistence on their clear and substantial distinction, an inability to consider or conceive infinity or the presumably unlimited spirit in itself unsettles his attempted delineation. The author affirms that "up to the epoch of our Manhood" this seemingly special feeling of constancy can not understand "that it might so have happened that we never existed at all." Thus, while youth believes, men doubt. The period when "conventional World-Reason awakens us from the truth of our dreams" also introduces the dreamer to the negatively delimiting notion that a greater intelligence exists than one's own: "Doubt, Surprise, and Incomprehensibility arrive at the same moment." Thus, in this cosmology of doubt, the heterogeneity from which youthful sentience arises, the recessive knot blocking consideration and conceivability, and the common sense of reason and doubt conspire to unsettle the clear distinction of youthful recollections or memories from dreams. Saved from solipsism by the irreconcilable boundaries between the spiritual and the material, the inside and the outside, Poe's cosmology nevertheless leads to a strange perceptual egotism or self-identity and an exaggerated sense of the heterogeneous point of view best articulated in Eureka: "No thinking being lives who, at some luminous point of his life of thought, has not felt himself lost amid the surges of futile efforts at

understanding, or believing, that anything exists <u>greater than his own soul</u>" (XVI 312). Thus, the dreamy or memorable feeling of a continuity seems to overcome the thought of a limit.

Yet, this absorbable sensitivity must find its limit in that boundary past which difference makes no difference. The impossibility of any soul, heterogeneously dependent on matter and possibly haunted or possessed by seraphs and demons, feeling inferior to any comparable soul and the "omnipotent aspirations at perfection," reflecting the spiritual and material coincidence of longing for the lost parent, characterize each individual identity's conflicted desire for a persistent coherence and consistency (XVI 313). Torn between constancy and interruption and between faith and doubt, Poe's tales and characters endeavor to explore this hauntingly indistinct rift in more detail.

Drawing on a faith in these inherent dreams or memories and dealing with the intellectual beliefs that presuppose a mental conception, as seen in the introduction, the narrator of "The Poetic Principle" finds humankind's mental world individualized into realms of intellects, tastes, and morals: "Just as the Intellect concerns itself with Truth, so Taste informs us of the Beauty while the Moral Sense is regardful of Duty" (XIV 273). Admitting that taste "holds intimate relations with" the intellect and morals and that a "faint difference" separates taste and morals (XIV 272), the ethical

Poe asserts that if conscience teaches dutiful obligation and reason teaches moral expediency, then taste displays the charms of morals and wages "war upon Vice solely on the ground of her deformity--her disproportion--her animosity to the fitting, to the appropriate, to the harmonious--in a word, to Beauty" (XIV 273). Thus, Poe directs a portion of beauty toward a moral service. Through reciprocities of adaptation, any aesthetic movement also becomes a movement of morality and intellect.[3]

As the intellect should fight "against its propensity for analogical inference--against its monomaniac grasping at the infinite" (XVI 292), so believing that reciprocally "the development of the terrestrial vitality [repulsion] proceeds equably with the terrestrial condensation" (attraction), Poe seems to suggests that desire should more or less diffusively resist the destructively concentrated propensity to grasp for the lost parent (XVI 259).

Finding the irrelative normal destabilizes the foundation for ultimate good and bad, but this position does not deny the possibilities for contextual laws. As the intuitive cosmologist of Eureka explains, a criminal violence of the abnormal many against the normal one haunts the forceful tendency of gravity:

> The absolute, irrelative particle created by the Volition
> of God, must have been in a condition of positive
> normality, or rightfulness--for wrongness implies
> relation. Right is positive; wrong is negative--is
> merely the negation of right; as cold is the negative of

> heat--darkness of light. That a thing may be wrong, it
> is necessary that there be some other thing in <u>relation</u>
> to which it <u>is</u> wrong--some condition which it fails to
> satisfy; some law which it violates; some being whom it
> aggrieves. If there be no such being, law, or condition,
> in respect to which the thing is wrong--and, still more
> especially, if no beings, laws, or conditions exist at
> all--then the thing can<u>not</u> be wrong and consequently must
> be <u>right</u>. Any deviation from normality involves a
> tendency to return to it. (XVI 233)

Thus in this intuited cosmology, spirituality, sentience, electricity, and heterogenity function in a material and spiritual wrongfulness to unity and nihility. This wrongfulness appears fitting for terrestrial human sentience, despite its suspended inability to relate ultimately to right. Always excessive in relation to ultimate entropy, like lingering afterimages, all heterogeneous images, memories, and relations mirror this criminal violence against an assumed, but lost constancy. Denying or resisting mourning and doubt forces the normal tendency of concentration toward the diffusively abnormal, the right tending toward irrelation toward the wrong. Yet, because the abnormal heterogenity of humankind operates with a criminally diffusive economy, a concentrated effort to return to the lost normality implies a premature and precipitous destruction. It violates terrestrial equity. Although this cryptically imaginative endeavor aggravates violence and leads to destructive abuses, Poe praises it as a struggle for supernal beauty "[i]nspired by an ecstatic prescience of the glories beyond the grave" and believes it has given to the world all that feels poetic (XIV 273-74). Humankind seems fated to adopt such conditional

relations of law and hastily and precipitously to overgeneralize their constancy. Poe's narrators tend more to fancy; although implicated in crime, most survive. By struggling to refuse to succumb to natural entropy, the projects of civilization and knowledge have attempted both imaginatively and fancifully to define and delimit the proper on their own terms (IV 203).

Implicating all endeavors and relations, these excessive attempts to control the uncontrollable stimulate a strange violence. The lack of any absolute right suspends proper judgment and casts ethical differences into a heterogeneous simulacrum of crime. Yet, through a contextual trust in passions and material nature as opposed to the artifices of intellects and civilization, Poe's tales analyze, from different narrative viewpoints, patterns of more or less violence arising from the applications of certain forces and values, despite their indefinite ethical dilemmas. Although Poe seems biased in favor of the natural and the emotional, in the three tales discussed an undecidability emerges through the civilized narrators' tastes that still suggests the deformity and disproportion of turning toward or away from the charms of beauty. Marred by suffering and torment, some deaths appear less than beautiful. Not many readers would choose the torturous horror of Roderick's constitutional evil or death, however imaginative and supernal. Willed by the mysterious heart divine, in Poe's intuitive dream, the strange

deviations of heterogenity situate and convict all sentient inheritances and relations of excess and crime: "This constitution has been effected by <u>forcing</u> the originally and therefore normally <u>one</u> into the abnormal condition of <u>many</u>" (XVI 207).

Not only does Poe's haunted cosmology render possession and affirmation into dreams, but it also converts loss and doubt into fantasies. Thus, interminably and indefinitely, the mourning of mourning and the doubting of doubting remain as strangely haunting suspensions that, drawn toward the certain uncertainty of death, sentient creatures must address. As affirming assertions, these dreams make a haunting difference to embodiments and reflections. All of Poe's stories unfold in terms of a mourning already ongoing, of responses to the strange hauntings of death. This mourning helps memorialize the narrator's point of view, his reflections on the irreducible identities of a lost self and a lost world. The critic's avowed credence in a heart divine and in the possibilities of illuminating moral inferences from material analogies (see XIV 191-92) turns toward the embodied interruptions of approaching death to discern different tendencies of ghost effects. These tendencies resonate and reflect everywhere for Poe. As irreconcilable presuppositions of a haunted cosmology of dreams of mourning, these adoptions in the orphanage allow strange undecidabilities to emerge between and with the proper and the improper, between and with

concentration and diffusion. Only between such undecidables might a reading occur, might an ethical decision situated in excess and violence erupt.

Intellectual Demons

As the scientific narrator in "The Fall of the House of Usher" serves as a foil for the imaginative artist, so the endorser of Locke's empirical notion of identity presents Morella's transcendental notions. Poe's views seem to agree completely with neither of the couple's intellectual approaches. Both appear to insist on the definitive truth or propriety of their beliefs. These intellectual stances have emotional effects. Focusing on the emotional inequities between the husband and wife and, then, the father and daughter will highlight the narrator's conflicted responses accompanying his intellectuality. The tale's embodiments appear through the intellectual and emotional viewpoint of the narrator as he presents the two females. Apart from Morella's "Presburg education," little of the couple's inherited backgrounds or physical descriptions of their dwelling receives attention (II 27). Apart from a brief autumn landscape announcing "a warm glow upon the waters" and a fallen rainbow before his wife's death and a holy place with a baptismal font and the ancestral vault before his daughter's death, few architectonic features appear. In addition to the narrator's biblical reference to Hinnon becoming Ge-Henna,

intellectual works insisting on the identity of thought and its accompanying consciousness seem to provide the reader with the principle textual allusions. Stemming from a strange and forbidden spirit kindling within the husband before his wife's death, ghost effects manifest for him between the double deaths of the females. Unaccounted for, these incredible possessions and phantoms lead to violences regarding identity, mourning, and doubt.

From his first encounter with Morella, the narrator claims that "my soul, from our first meeting, burned with fires it had never before known; but the fires were not of Eros" (II 27). Despite this denial, he apparently found sufficient erotic interest in the woman to help conceive their child, for on her deathbed the pregnant wife says, "'when my spirit departs shall the child live--thy child and mine, Morella's'" (II 30). Losing control, the husband finds these fires a bitter torment because, as he says, "I could in no manner define their unusual meaning, or regulate their vague intensity," yet "fate bound us together at the altar." Perhaps a convenient or arranged wedding for him, the husband acknowledges unambiguously his rigid emotional reserve: "I never spoke of passion, nor thought of love." With these emotional restraints, the riveted narrator finds his wife's profound erudition fascinating, for "her powers of mind were gigantic." Once bringing him wonders and dreams, Morella seems emotionally involved with him; as the narrator claims,

she "shunned society, and, attaching herself to me alone, rendered me happy" (II 27). Nevertheless, his concentrated emotional reserve influences her. Morella's frustration and possible bitterness emerge on her deathbed when she states: "'The days have never been when thou couldst love me--but her whom in life thou didst abhor, in death thou shalt adore'" (II 30). Whether through an anticipatory clairvoyance or foresight into the darkness of her husband's reflective narcissism or through a curse, the unhappy mother imagines the melancholy direction that her double's torment takes. Despite Morella's womanly longing for an adoring love, the narrator fascinated with her mental powers marries her, according to him, without a thought of love, albeit with, perhaps, an unspoken modicum of passionate, but denied, eroticism.

Derived from the volumes of "theological morality" that "formed, for so long a time, almost the sole conversation" of the wife and husband (II 28), their preferred dogmas suggest that "the imaginative Morella" found "the most of beauty" in the Pythagorean notion of palingenesis, a reviving regeneration or rebirth, and the transcendental idealists' concepts of Fichte's pantheism and Schelling's identity; the husband favored Locke's empirical notion of personal identity (II 29). The husband persistently concentrates on the issues surrounding the self and individual identity. For the husband, this "principium individuationis--the notion of that identity which at death is or is not lost forever"--fascinates

as "a consideration of intense interest." The constitution of these "perplexing and exciting" identities and "the marked and agitated manner in which Morella mentioned them" stimulate his intellectual interest (II 29).

This obsessive intellectual attention to individual identity leads to a monomania that characterizes the couple's intellectual excesses. Drawing from <u>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</u>, the narrator thinks that Locke "truly defines" this identity as "the saneness [sic misprint in Harrison for sameness] of a rational being" (II 29). The husband paraphrases the philosopher[4]:

> And since by person we understand an intelligent essence
> having reason, and since there is a consciousness which
> always accompanies thinking, it is this which makes us
> all to be that which we call <u>ourselves</u>--thereby
> distinguishing us from other beings that think, and
> giving us our personal identity. (II 29)

According to Locke's empiricism, this sameness of rational thinking, accompanied by consciousness, defines properly the person or self, regardless of what human body it finds itself in and what forces operate on its soul. The empiricist Locke allows for the possibility of reincarnation, and the narrator's paraphrased definition appears in a lengthy discussion concerning the possibilities of transmigration.

The imaginative Morella finds the most beauty in the thrilling theories of ideal transcendentalists. For the sake of brevity, only Schelling's doctrine of identity, in which the intuited merges with the intuitant, will receive

attention.   In his <u>System of Transcendental Idealism</u>,
Schelling finds that for identity the determinate concept

> is nothing else but the act of thinking itself, and
> abstracted from this it is nothing. The act of self-
> consciousness must likewise give rise to a concept for
> us, and this is nothing other than that of the self.
> . . .   Thus the self can only be presented <u>qua act</u> as
> such, and is otherwise nothing. (25)

Separating this "<u>pure</u> consciousness or <u>self-consciousness</u>"

from the "merely empirical consciousness" that "continues

along with the presentations of objects, and maintains

identity in the flux of presentations," Schelling elaborates

his notion of self-identity:

> The self simply <u>has no existence, prior</u> to that act
> whereby thinking becomes its own object, and is thus
> itself nothing other than thinking becoming its object,
> and hence absolutely nothing apart from the thought.
> --That this identity between being-thought and coming-to-
> be, in the case of the self, remains hidden from so many,
> is due solely to the fact that they neither perform the
> act of self-consciousness in freedom, nor are able to
> reflect in so doing upon what arises therein. (25)

Without a thinking intuitant, no intuited can appear. In this

"original identity of thought and object, appearance and

reality" (25), within this ideally psychic context, there lie

two kinds of coherent consciousness typified by "I think" and

"I am." Schelling recasts Descartes' "<u>cogito ergo sum</u>":

> On abandoning oneself entirely to the involuntary
> successions of presentations, these latter, however
> manifold and diverse they may be, will still appear as
> belonging to a single identical subject. If I reflect
> upon this identity of the subject among its
> presentations, there arises for me the proposition '<u>I</u>
> <u>think</u>'.   It is this 'I think' which accompanies all
> presentations and preserves the continuity of
> consciousness between them. --But if we free ourselves
> from all presentations, so as to achieve an <u>original</u>
> self-awareness, there arises--not the proposition <u>I</u>

> <u>think</u>, but the proposition 'I am', which is beyond doubt
> a higher proposition. The words 'I think' already give
> expression to a determination or affection of the self;
> the proposition '<u>I am</u>', on the contrary, is an infinite
> proposition, since it is one that has no <u>actual</u>
> predicate, though for that very reason it is the locus of
> an infinity of <u>possible</u> predicates. (25-26)

Because nothing lies outside immediate consciousness, the infinite "I am" serves as the immediate certainty of Schelling's idealism. Resonating with Morella's ghostly "'I am here!'" (Harrison II 33), the proposition "I am" as "the most individual of all truths" serves Schelling as the absolute preconception (<u>System of Transcendental Idealism</u> 8). Due to the reflective dependence of the consciousness of the mental on the physical, when through death the fabric of the organism destroys itself through its own waxing and waning powers, an absolute loss of identity between the organism and intelligence occurs (128). It remains difficult to grasp even a possibility of transmigration from Schelling's thought, but the daughter's last words and heavenly gaze seem to suggest a spiritual disembodiment toward an undetermined "I am."

Playing on the eye/I pun, the narrator of "Morella" dependently feels his spouse's dominant powers of mind and in part tries to become her student: "I felt this, and in many matters, became her pupil" (II 27). With an ambivalent confusion that fails to separate his reflections from hers, he wants to keep properly reasoned thoughts and deeds for himself as opposed to her mystical ideals:

> In all this, if I err not, my reason had little to do.
> My convictions, or I forget myself, were in no manner

> acted upon by the ideal, nor was any tincture of the
> mysticism which I read, to be discovered, unless I am
> greatly mistaken, either in my deeds or thoughts.
> Persuaded of this, I abandoned myself implicitly to the
> guidance of my wife, and entered with an unflinching
> heart into the intricacies of her studies. (II 28)

This qualified claim of a clear and untainted distinction in
his dependent relation remains almost incomprehensible, but it
reflects the fantasy of contextual purity that those in
pursuit of intellectual ideals, including those of empiricism,
tend to believe they can attain or have obtained, through
their rigorously faithful thoughts and actions. His weird
contortions problematize undecidably his sense of self, his
identity. Hesitant to admit his contamination, his already
lost situation, enhanced by his implicit abandonment to her
guidance, he explicitly underscores his doubt and its many
possibilities, "if I err not," "I forget myself," and "unless
I am greatly mistaken." Holding in place an incorporative and
introjective lodgement, his cherished, inconsistent insistence
begins to diffuse a grave consistency onto his wife, daughter,
and their intellectual reflections. From the following events
dealing with the nature of personal identity, this admission
seems as close to a concession to the mysterious contamination
and reflection of his wife's wild theories as he can accept.

In relation to incorporative longing, the adherence to
memorial dreams, whether empirical or transcendental, both he
and his wife try to remain faithful to their own beliefs in a
coherent sameness and a continuity of originality, as did
Roderick and the Ushers' narrator. Suggesting a cryptic

perversion of tastes, the narrator's idealized fascination with his spouse's secret knowledge prepares for the possibilities of disappointment and disillusion. The dreams of identity's consistency remain strangely haunted by the disruptions of heterogeneity. In the uncertain mental realms of the spirit, the intellectual ambivalence of the dependent narrator follows his emotional cleavage and shifts from dreams of hope to fear, from dreams of beautiful joy to hideous horror. Abjectly afraid of uncertainty, he fiendishly relegates and excludes his friendly wife and her views to the impure and improper, but on reflection and as her wed double, he can not so easily separate himself from the forbidden.

What he takes as the irreverent instruction provided by his wife sparks a forbidden spirit that enfolds him:

> And then--then, when, poring over forbidden pages, I felt a forbidden spirit enkindling within me--would Morella place her cold hand upon my own, and rake up from the ashes of a dead philosophy some low, singular words, whose strange meaning burned themselves in upon my memory. (II 28)

Suggesting the way reading Poe's texts affects reader identifications through dilemmas of trust and doubt, this raking up of strange and spectral meanings from the forbidden pages of her books burns into the narrator's memory as if to create a demonic enkindling within his identity. This tormenting fire seems to concentrate his responsive inability to understand or care for his wife. Overlooking the uncertain assumptions of his strange adherence to identity's true definition, the husband arrogates judgment. Although he feels

inadequate before Morella's erudition, the narrator declares forbidden the books he reads and the spirit engendered from them and her. A reflectively fiendish abjection haunts his addictive adherence to his own proper ideals and helps him to forget himself. As he methodically approaches inconsistancy, the narrator loses whatever sense of propriety he might have had and, as Freud suggested, broadcasts his own abject guilt. Faithful to their speculative ideals from elsewhere, from the lost and the dead, as doubles reflecting their excesses, the couple's obsessive visions engage in a violent struggle. Alluding to her seemingly magical powers, the husband claims "the mystery of my wife's manner oppressed me as a spell" (II 29).

In her consciousness of him and his gaze on her, their different concerns emerge as they appeal to the coherences of their respective theories. As seen by the husband, knowing that he could no longer bear her, Morella seemed conscious of his fated folly or weakness as a cause for his estranged regard. He claims she neither reveals the nature of his loathing, nor blames or upbraids him. Observing her womanly languishing away, he regards her suffering and dying body with pity, but then reels before her eyes' bottomless reflections. Her ex-pupil describes his insight: "I met the glance of her meaning eyes, and then my soul sickened and became giddy with the giddiness of one who gazes downward into some dreary and unfathomable abyss" (II 29-30). The dizzying mirroring of her

eyes/I's ranges drearily and depressingly between the infinite abyss and her witnessing perceptions of his weakness. The reflections of their orbs become exorbitant. Thus, he pulls back from pitying her; he abandons the care implicit in the holy wedding vows. From an estranged abjection, he longs for her death.

Perhaps, he never acknowledges the complaints Morella delivers on her deathbed; he claims he never thought of love nor spoke of passion. The estranged husband responsively moves back from her unspoken reflections about his "alienation" and to what he thinks he can see, an empirical sameness (II 29). But something else eludes him and reflectively disrupts his own sameness. Although he claims to regard his friend Morella "[w]ith a feeling of deep yet most singular affection" (II 27), the husband also admits that he "longed with an earnest and consuming desire for the moment of Morella's decease." Because her "fragile spirit clung to its tenement of clay" overlong for him, he claims "my tortured nerves obtained mastery over my mind" and, then,

> I grew furious through delay, and with the heart of a fiend, cursed the days . . . which seemed to lengthen and lengthen as her gentle life declined--like the shadows in the dying of the day. (II 30)

Fortified by his unsettled purity, his passionate sense of her forbidden horror, the enraged spouse curses his pregnant wife to a bad death. While her pregnancy remains unmentioned at this point in his tale, this odious curse if then enacted would also kill their gestating child and implicate him in an

abortion or infanticide. His hardness carries into the possibility of reading his final words to her, four "Morella"'s and the query, "'how knowest thou this?'", as an assured empiricist baiting a mystical transcendentalist, rather than an astonishment at her foretelling of his coming sorrow, his depressed survival (II 31). Yet, he admits to a fiend and a demon enkindled within him and speaking through him. With a consciousness eluding his reasoned thought as either a spirit possession or a covert aggression, he finds himself longing for her demise. He does not possess his own identity solely. If not for the strange, phantasmic addition to the family, bereft of her mother, the depressive narrator seems prepared to wrap himself in his singular shroud and ambivalently to protect his secret love by broadcasting not only his singular affection for the woman, but also his complicity in her death. Thus, he might appear narcissistically proud of the abhorrence she endured from him as an indicator of her affection for him.

The narrator relates that in dying Morella "had given birth [to a child] . . . which breathed not until the mother breathed no more" (II 31). This abject juncture of death and birth both pleases and disturbs the father. With a parental narcissism, the intellect of the house confers the mother's constancy onto the daughter. Conflating a suspension with the same, he passes to the child an unspoken rift, a preservative repression. The same obsessive forces that kept his

attachments to the wife in place move their boundaries onto the child with an economy like that of the addicted father finding his oldest daughter replacing his enabling, but dead, wife. The ghostly child comes to perfectly resemble the wife:

> she grew strangely in stature and intellect, and was the perfect resemblance of her who had departed, and I loved her with a love more fervent than I had believed it possible to feel for any denizen of earth. (II 31)

Predictably from his prior ambivalence, he finds "gloom, and horror, and grief" accompanying and sweeping over his love (II 31). The narrator feels anew and strangely his wife's powerful and fated attraction to him. Reenacting his prior trauma, reflectively he finds his child's embodiment vibrating with the same words, spectacles, and thoughts as his spouse had had.

Feeling compelled by destiny to adore this strange child, the father isolates her "from the scrutiny of the world" and holds her "in the rigorous seclusion of my home" (II 32). Rapidly maturing bodily and mentally to usurp and confirm the father's dominion, the beloved terror grows toward fulfilling the mother's niche. Drawing on memories, the witness gradually recognizes the mother inhabiting his child's body. Whether the habitation and legacy stem from a haunting or a familiar projection remains uncertain. A strange narcissism unfolds as the husband sees his daughter more definitely doubling her dead mother.[5] Avoiding even naming his child, the narrator never speaks to his daughter about her mother.

His emotional rigidity appears through a reemergence of the sameness of his empiricism. In the child, the father sees "the wisdom and the passions of maturity . . . gleaming from its full and speculative eye" (II 31), and when she gazes on him, he shudders because her eyes "too often looked down into the depths of my soul with Morella's own intense and bewildering meaning." The fascinating hypnotic constancy between the mother and daughter haunts through "new points of resemblance" and a "too _perfect_ identity" (II 32).

This ghastly familial phantom precipitates a domestic violence through an excessively reflected sameness. Despite his love, the father feels the same haunting disappointment and lack of acknowledgement felt with his wife. Doubly, this perceived and assimilated unity becomes "hideously terrible," and when the narrator hears the ghost of the forbidden speak, he finds a strange horror and thought eating him: "in the phrases and expressions of the dead on the lips of the loved and living, I found food for consuming thought and horror--for a worm that _would_ not die" (II 32). This addictive obsession with a ghostly unity of meaning fires incorporative dreams into an imaged appearance of haunting and criminal destruction. With a constrained and concentrated memory and force, his excessive concepts and necromantic images bring a powerful violence, perhaps focused by his will, to bear on his child. Even if his daughter springs from some spirit's thought, telesthesia, or palingenesis, the fearful father

confronts in his child's body a phantasmic conveyance, a ghost meaning, that doubles his own disappointments and aggressions.

Seeking relief or release from this dilemma, the empiricist appeals to "the ceremony of baptism" to serve as "a present deliverance from the terrors of my destiny." If the wife's forbidden theological morality haunts him through the child, he turns to a holy man of the Christian tradition to exorcise its impurities. With an irreconcilably wounded, yet omnipotent, sense of narcissism, the intellect's perverse naming of his child after the dead mother seems violently to do away with his dilemma. Undecided on his selection of titles, the violator asks: "What prompted me, then, to disturb the memory of the buried dead?" With this double attack and death of Morella, the narrator falls back on his haunting narcissism and undergoes a cryptic collapse. Carrying his child to a holy place and hesitating for a name at the baptismal font, the narrator asserts that, not he, but some demon or "fiend spoke from the recesses of my soul." Echoing and placing Schelling's infinite and undetermined "I am," the glassy-eyed daughter seems to reflect and embody the excluded and indistinct difference, the remains, of her father's repressive sameness. The father attends carefully to the effects of his syllables as he asks:

> What more than fiend convulsed the features of my child, and overspread them with hues of death, as starting at that scarcely audible sound, she turned her glassy eyes from the earth to heaven, and, falling prostrate on the black slabs of our ancestral vault, responded--"I am here!" (II 33)

Precipitated by the killing name spoken from the recesses of the narrator's soul, a disembodying cleavage seems to break the oppressive spell by separating the corporeal remainder from an apparently infinitely resonating "'I am here!'" Both rhetorical and complicitous, the narrator's inquiries solicit the reader's reflections on identity's uncertainty and doubtfulness, its limits of duplicity and confidence.

Hearing the answer of the dead as "[d]istinct, coldly, calmly distinct," the narrator assures readers that those simple sounds of Morella's name "like molten lead, rolled hissingly into my brain." Delivering himself from the horror of his doubled double by using the same name for his child as for the dead, the husband and father fashions and keeps a memorial dwelling for himself: "Years--years may pass away, but the memory of that epoch--never!" (II 33). With the passing of his forbidden and meaningful reflections, the doubles' suggestive memorial remains. Arising from the first meeting with his wife and through his ghostly child's last words, a strange and fearful violence accompanies his survival. Rationally disconnected from himself by his fiendish heart and demonic possessions, not himself, he fails to maintain his personal identity's sameness. As an ideal response, through a depressing obsession, his attempted constancy helps inflict a criminal violence on himself and his estranged wife that haunts him through his offspring and, with

both losses, continues to haunt him with an uncertain necrophilia and melancholia:

> I kept no reckoning of time or place, and the stars of my fate faded from heaven, and therefore the earth grew dark, and its figures passed by me, like flitting shadows, and among them I beheld only--Morella. The winds of the firmament breathed but one sound within my ears, and the ripples upon the sea murmured evermore--Morella. (II 34)

This decathective and obsessive loss of attention for anything but the suggestive shadows and murmurs of the departed mark him as abjectly haunted by the negative. By concentrating on the true and sanctified sameness, incorporatively he considers his fated stars as faded from heaven. The haunted identities of Morella displace onto haunting entities.

Disappointed and unacknowledged by his cherished fascination, the cemetery guard senses Morella haunting his sight and hearing. He consigns his life to the care of the dead. Mirrored by his wife's averted face and daughter's last gaze turned toward heaven, his fate seems to rest with indistinct demons and fiends. Like the cypress and hemlock overshadowing him, this new and mournful sorrow remains his doubtful deliverance. Like the melancholic broadcasting his guilt and feeling no shame, the joyless narrator seems unaware of the ethical implications of his criminal responses, his killing and suicidal convictions. Despite his singular affection and adoration, an inconsiderate incoherence marks his passion, his emotional care. His intellectual adherence to the true constancy of identity leads to domestic violence.

Each violent attempt at a holy delivery mires him more deeply in mourning and doubt. Having heroically pursued what he regards as a pure sameness, his sense of beauty, instead of a blessed reward, he dreams no more happy dreams. Such a triumph might well seem empty as it places him and his images at charnel borders. Thus, discovering the suggestive emptiness of the negative enfolding the family tomb, he reflectively closes his story by hollowly laughing "a long and bitter laugh as I found no trace of the first, in the charnel where I laid the second--Morella" (II 34).

Angelic Fidelity

Following a different topological tendency from "Morella," the passionately fanciful narrator of "Eleonora" writes about his dreamy recollections and remembrances of love. While the narrator of "Morella" resists the reader's doubt with complicitous questions and assertions of his faithful beliefs, the narrator of "Eleonora" invites the reader to doubt more openly his dreams. Closer to the family oversights and violences of "The Fall of the House of Usher," although less murderous, these dreams depict a landscape of the valley and his first love, her death and their deathbed promises, and the haunting that follow him into the strange city. His introjective desires and his devices of belief relate to his dreamy memories of the mournful vale, its entities and identities. Accepting the possibility of an

improper madness, his insanity, and the unknowability of the great secret, the writer deals with an aggrieving crime that he might have committed against the fidelity to his double. As he responds to the spiritual fascination of a new love, the haunted mourner seems to receive an absolution from his cousin for his displacement of affection. Admitting to a recreancy in relation to his first seraphic love, his assumption of impurity and concern seems to reduce violence and to open hopefully onto the possibilities of a different love. Accepting his doubtful losses, strange heterogeneities, and possible recreancy, the passionate dreamer of beauty attempts to respond respectfully as much as possible to the material and spiritual embodiments of his loves.

Stressing his emotional inheritance, the narrator claims descent from "a race noted for vigor of fancy and ardor of passion" (IV 236). Tracing the transparency of his dreamy situation to the hidden recesses of the valley and his love's heart, the concerned lover tries to discover its and his spiritual limits, instead of appealing to a destructive and cryptic imagination. Admitting that this legacy of passionate fancy leads to a possible "disease of thought" stemming from an exaltation of "moods of mind . . . at the expense of the general intellect," he questions the propriety of both sanity and the intellect by asking "whether madness is or is not the loftiest intelligence." Finding that dreamers by day become "cognizant of many things which escape those who dream only by

night," he believes in the grey visions of daydreamers who "obtain glimpses of eternity, and thrill, in awaking, to find that they have been upon the verge of the great secret." From the sea of shades and shadows, according to him, these mystical dreamers "learn something of the wisdom which is of good, and more of the mere knowledge which is of evil" (IV 236). Thus, the narrator pursues the mad dreams of fancy to explore the mysterious secrets of good wisdom and evil knowledge. If this cognizance appears mad, he agrees to call himself mad and seemingly divides his mental life into "two distinct conditions":

> The condition of a lucid reason, not to be disputed, and belonging to the memory of events forming the first epoch of my life--and a condition of shadow and doubt, appertaining to the present, and to the recollection of what constitutes the second era of my being. (IV 236-37)

Eleonora's death marks the boundary between which these haunting memories and recollections suspend.

In the first published version of "Eleonora," Poe atypically names his narrator Pyrros, perhaps after the skeptic Pyrrho, but suppressed the name in later editions. Calmly penning these "remembrances" of his beloved cousin and caught in shadow and doubt, the author writes from the second era. In this era, he feels "that a shadow gathers over my brain, and I mistrust the perfect sanity of the record" (IV 241). Aware of the problematic credibility overcasting his story, the writer tries to tell his readers how to take the possibilities of each condition:

> what I shall tell of the earlier period, believe; and to
> what I may relate of the later time, give only such
> credit as may seem due; or doubt it altogether; or, if
> doubt it ye cannot, then play unto its riddle the
> Oedipus. (IV 237)

While instructing the reader to believe the dreams of his earlier period, his haunting and strange city life appear circumscribed by doubt. With this second era, a partial skepticism, a thorough skepticism, or, if skepticism seems to fail, an attempt to interpret the text's enigmatic mystery emerge as three possibilities. Because the remembrances he pens stem from the later time, the author encourages his readers to doubt his memorial.

Suggesting the ways readers might approach his remembrances, the narrator ends his paragraph on dreams by mentioning the Nubian's explorations on the sea of shades and his paragraph on credence and doubt by alluding to Oedipus' correct response, "man," to the sphinx's riddle even as he remains blind to his own situation. When Eleonora sees that "the finger of Death was upon her bosom" and thereafter "dwelt only upon this one sorrowful theme" (IV 240), the writer compares her varied images with Hafiz's interlacings on the topic. In the tale's context, these textual allusions suggest man's enigmatic lodgement between dreams and death.

Having lost both of his parents, the orphan in his first epoch dwells with his cousin and her mother in the Valley of Many-Colored Grass, an isolated and tropical vale surrounded by beetling hills that shut "out the sunlight from its

sweetest recesses." Reaching their encircled domain requires
both guidance and the forceful putting back and crushing of
its vegetative barriers. Sharing a familial heritage, the
three live "all alone, knowing nothing of the world without
the valley." The narrator avoids describing any architecture
and, instead, dwells on the exotic, almost oriental, natural
landscape. In the valley's dreamy heart, the River of Silence
exerts "a hushing influence in its flow" (IV 237). He depicts
the river:

> No murmur arose from its bed, and so gently it wandered
> along, that the pearly pebbles upon which we loved to
> gaze, far down within its bosom stirred not at all, but
> lay in a motionless content, each in its own old station,
> shining on gloriously forever. (IV 237-38)

Suggesting the flow of life over the cosmologist's dream of an
irrelative particle proper (see XVI 241 and 244), this clear
stream reflects in its depths those unchanging pearly pebbles
that appear to last forever, but its banks seem less easily
delimited:

> The margin of the river, and of the many dazzling
> rivulets that glided, through devious ways, into its
> channel, as well as the spaces that extend from the
> margins away down into the depths of the streams until
> they reached the bed of pebbles at the bottom,--these
> spots, not less than the whole surface of the valley,
> from the river to the mountains that girdled it in, were
> carpeted all by a soft green grass, thick, short,
> perfectly even, and vanilla-perfumed. (IV 238)

For the fanciful dreamer, the multicolored underwater grass
carpets even the river's bottom. The difficulty in situating
this margin ripples out to attempts to interpose different
distinctions: among them the conditions before and after

Eleonora's death, his departure from the valley, and the cessation of the ghostly manifestations.

Before "Love entered within our hearts" (IV 238), his cousin and he roamed for fifteen years through the groves of fantastic trees that sprang up "like wildernesses of dreams" and the many colorful flowers.[6] Springing from their reflective images in the stream, despite its odd margin problems, a narcissistic and erotic sharing of love inflames the passions that haunted their forefathers and changes the valley:

> we sat, locked in each other's embrace, beneath the serpent-like trees, and looked down within the waters of the River of Silence at our images therein. . . . We had drawn the god Eros from the wave, and now we felt that we had enkindled within us the fiery souls of our forefathers. The passions which for centuries distinguished our race, came thronging with the fancies for which they had been equally noted, and together breathed a delirious bliss over the Valley of the Many-Colored Grass. A change fell upon all things. (IV 239)

The vacillating images in the watery flow enflame and vivify the inherited souls that spawn passions and fancies capable of changing the apparently material valley. This erotic sensitivity causes life to arise in their paths. Starting with "[s]trange brilliant flowers, star-shaped, burst[ing] out upon the trees where no flowers had been known before," the green tints of the grass deepen, ruby-red asphodels replace the daisies, the flamingo flies into the vale and flaunts his plumage, and fish haunt the river (IV 239). From the bosom of the River of Silence a murmur swells into a lulling and divine

melody; the stream speaks. A huge crimson and gold cloud from the west floats over the valley and sinks gradually to rest on the mountain tops. This filtering cloud changes the light quality in the vale and turns the mountains' "dimness into magnificence." The lovers find themselves shut up in the valley "as if forever, within a magic prison-house of grandeur and of glory" (IV 239). Fitting to their tastes, their grand and glorious habitation becomes at once beautifully magical and imprisoning. After Eleonora's death, the eroticization reverses in a physical fading and withering as "a second change had come upon all things" (IV 241). The river's murmurs die away into a solemn silence, and the cloud rises up and departs to the west. Their naturally inherited love seems powerful enough magically to change the material valley, or perhaps these memorable changes remain a dreamy story.

Shut up in this vale, the doubles love even as death puts its finger on Eleonora's bosom. Her lover tells about his caring attachment:

> The loveliness of Eleonora was that of the Seraphim; but she was a maiden artless and innocent as the brief life she had led among the flowers. No guile disguised the fervor of love which animated her heart, and she examined with me its inmost recesses as we walked together in the Valley of the Many-Colored Grass, and discoursed of the mighty changes which had lately taken place therein. (IV 239-40)

With a seraphic loveliness, Eleonora examines animatedly her heart's inmost recesses with the author. Unlike the demonic inquiries of the narrator of "Morella," who peers into the unfathomable sameness of his wife's eyes, this angelic

examination depends on the lovers' peripatetic discourse and cooperative sharing.[7] This respect and concern for the recessive boundaries of the young and innocent lover's heart and vegetative passions contrast with the imaginative and penetrating intellectual dogmas of the angry couple in "Morella." Although the couple share a familial inheritance, the author's query about the artlessness and innocence of the juvenile, "for what was she but a child?", seems to question his cousin's maturity and to imply his dominance (IV 241). By embodying an inherited passion and fancy and examining the vestigial recess lost to consideration, the lovers seem to open up angelic possibilities from their necrophiliac inheritances and dreamy memories. Perhaps violating the divinely interposed knot, their doubtful and mournful acceptance discursively adopts a seraphic approach to the woman's death and her phantom effects.

The narrator believes he might have committed a breach of promise in relation to his former lover's memory. As the child dies through no apparent fault of her own, the narrator explains his beloved "grieved to think that having entombed her in the Valley of Many-Colored Grass, I would quit forever its happy recesses, transferring the love which now was so passionately her own to some maiden of the outer and every-day world." The angelic Eleonora jealously fears the transference of the writer's love to a different material embodiment. To ease her dying, the youth takes an eternal vow of fidelity:

> then and there, I threw myself hurriedly at the feet of
> Eleonora, and offered up a vow, to herself and to Heaven,
> that I would never bind myself in marriage to any
> daughter of Earth--that I would in no manner prove
> recreant to her dear memory, or to the memory of the
> devout affection with which she had blessed me. (IV 240)

The spiritual pledge involves a promise never to marry any daughter of Earth and not to prove unfaithful or yield in his duties to Eleonora's memory or to the memory of her blessed and devoted affection. He does not pledge to stay in the valley or to refuse any remarriage. If he remains faithful to Eleonora's memory and finds a spirit not of the earth, then he can marry that spirit. Exceeding the narrator's capacity to approach the recessive knot limiting the capacity to know, these negatives, "never" and "in no manner," engage memorial effects past conceivability. Perhaps, as his remembrance indicates, the narrator does not break any of these promises although he might have believed that he had broken them by wedding somebody new, but most of the tale's suspense or conflict seems to derive from the possibility that he deserts or runs away from his hasty promise.

If he remains reflectively loyal to the spiritual recesses of his love's heart, then possibly through some uncertain spiritual conversion, he faithfully keeps his vow by conveying his memorial affections onto a different seraph. This longing for continuity seems to arise from heart-felt emotional dreams rather than from the demands of artistic imaginations or intellectual truths. The deferral engaged by the promised refusal of transference appears uncannily and

perversely to bring him to that very displacement. If Eleonora haunts the narrator's vision of Ermengarde with some indistinct continuity, then the seemingly guilty narrator might not break his commitment to Eleonora. This unsettled possibility prepares the way for Eleonora's haunted absolution of his vows.

To bind his oath, the writer invokes a curse upon himself, as if his promise did not already function as a torment:

> And I called the Mighty Ruler of the Universe to witness the pious solemnity of my vow. And the curse which I invoked of <u>him</u> and of her, a saint in Helusion, should I prove traitorous to that promise, invoked a penalty the exceeding great horror of which will not permit me to make record of here. (IV 241)

This horrible curse seems unrecordable before his readers; somehow the writer deems it unspeakable or inappropriate. Arrogating the judgment of the heart divine, perhaps god's, he may engage an excessively great horror that remains suggestively unspecified, but if the narrator, like a confidence man, proves treasonous to his vow, he might expect its penalty to emerge from memory upon its articulation. Potently unrecorded, the missing words might awaken the violence from which the criminal wishes to defend himself. The childish Eleonora seems to respond enthusiastically to his excessive vow and curse as to a blessing: "the bright eyes of Eleonora grew brighter at my words" (IV 241).

For his vows which "made easy to her the bed of her death," his dying love makes unearthly promises to her lover. She tells him,

> because of what I had done for the comfort of her spirit, she would watch over me in that spirit when departed, and, if so it were permitted her, return to me visibly in the watches of the night; but, if this thing were, indeed, beyond the power of the souls in Paradise, that she would, at least, give me frequent indications of her presence; sighing upon me in the evening winds, or filling the air which I breathed with perfume from the censers of the angels. (IV 241)

Her dying words promise to haunt him spiritually for his care for her, for his incorporative vow of fidelity to her memory. Her promised blessing for his careful fidelity might also appear as a curse. If her specter can not come back to him "in the watches of the night," she would at least make him aware of her ghostly presence and/or absence with frequent indications of perfumes and sighs. As a limited saint in Elysium, a pagan Greek underworld for the good and blessed, the angel seems unable to come back visibly to her lover. With the care of her lover, she dies a better, a more beautiful, death than Morella.

The pledge of her fidelity for his kept memory seems linked to "her" phantom effects. Feeling a shadow gathering over his brain and distrusting the "perfect sanity of the record," the narrator begins years of mourning: "years dragged themselves along heavily, and still I dwelled within the Valley of the Many-Colored Grass" (IV 241). A material withering comes over the valley and the affects of the lovers'

eroticism fades, even if their spiritual rapport preserves itself.

The second epoch of his life starts with her ghostly hauntings. She exceeds her promises:

> Yet the promises of Eleonora were not forgotten; for I heard the sounds of the swinging of the censers of the angels; and streams of a holy perfume floated ever and ever about the valley; and at lone hours, when my heart beat heavily, the winds that bathed my brow came unto me laden with soft sighs; and indistinct murmurs filled often the night air; and once--oh, but once only! I was awaked from a slumber like the slumber of death by the pressing of spiritual lips upon my own. (IV 242)

Even though Eleonora lies dead, her promises remain unforgotten. As a suggestion of negativity, she orally blesses him with a kiss from the dead: "once--oh, but once only! I was awakened from a slumber like the slumber of death by the pressing of spiritual lips upon my own." It appears unclear whether the memory of the narrator or of Eleonora's spirit does not forget. While the madness of the writer remains an unsettled question, Eleonora's phantom seems passionately mad for the writer. In addition to ethereal indications, the narrator also hears angel censers and indistinct murmurs. These ghostly sounds, smells, and the morbid orality do not satisfy the material longing for emotional constancy, as the narrator puts it, of "the void within my heart" (IV 242). His love and care in the valley crest with Eleonora's memorial disembodiment.

While attempting to keep or incorporate the dreams or memories of his youth, the writer accepts their introjective

fading and withering. Despite or, maybe, due to her spectral manifestations, her memorable loss intensifies his painful emptiness. The withered valley and her telepathic haunting seem to make his pain worse. Still, the narrator does not deny his losses, but suffers their torment. He mourns. Reflecting the river's flow, the fluid watery images of floating, bathing, and tears supply moving conveyances between the enkindling passions of appeasement. Ebbing toward nothingness, the narrator's persistently faithful heart refuses its longed-for filling; yet desiring some satisfaction, he writes: "I longed for the love which had before filled it to overflowing." In his vale of mourning, this emptiness tortures the narrator enough to lead to his departure: "I left it forever for the vanities and the turbulent triumphs of the world" (IV 242).

Insisting on his avowed fidelity, the immigrant perceives the bewildering and intoxicating influences of the surprisingly "strange city, where all things might have served to blot from recollection the sweet dreams I had dreamed so long in the Valley" (IV 243). Turning away from the valley and toward the distractions of the city, the pilgrim diminishes the sweet and dreamy suggestions of the negative. Marking a disorientation and loss symptomatic of a cryptic collapse, the intoxicating and bewildering strangeness might possibly unsettle with doubt his recollection of the valley's indistinct recesses. Nevertheless, after years of grieving,

a forgetful disregard seems to force the vow and her promise toward oblivion. The traveler finds and weds a new love.

With a single exception, Eleonora's ghostly manifestations stop as the writer meets Ermengarde. A displaced dream of continuity eases the introjective mourning. Considering the horrors of his vow, the narrator's "forgetting" might stem from either his attraction to Ermengarde or from the abandonment felt in the pit of his heart at the disappearance of Eleonora's phantom signs. Given the frequent indications of Eleonora's haunting, it surprises that the writer would violate his promise with the expectation that his invoked horror would come, unless its horror seemed preferable to the torture of having Ermengarde before him and Eleonora haunting him. He almost takes the haunting for granted. But as the seraph Ermengarde arrives, Eleonora's indications abate:

> Suddenly, these manifestations they ceased; and I stood
> aghast at the burning thoughts which possessed--at the
> terrible temptations which beset me; for there came from
> some far, far distant and unknown land, into the gay
> court of the king I served, a maiden to whose beauty my
> whole recreant heart yielded at once. (IV 243)

Dependently, he submits to this beautiful new love with a superlatively ardent and "abject worship of love" (IV 243). Ermengarde's angelic beauty, the narrator's vigor of fancy, and his passionate ardor overwhelm him, and through excessive desire and disregard he appears to consign to a marginal oblivion the memories and to overlook the vows made to comfort his dying love. This excess may mark the narrator's

criminality, his recreancy of heart. Still, his written remembrances contradict his forgetting. Uncertain, he seems both to confess to the childish indiscretion and blindness of his excessive curse and to his heart's traitorous recreancy. As the ghostly haunting almost ceases, burning thoughts possess the ghastly lover.

Having mourned the disappearance of Eleonora, the narrator appears to convey similar desires onto Ermengarde. Having assimilated what he can of the specter of loss, the ghostly mourner weds without dread of the curse and "its bitterness was not visited upon me" (IV 243). Faithful to the recesses of their memories, hearts, and loves, the apparently dependent author does not transfer his love to a different embodiment, but, rather, finds a continuity of his dreamy love reflected through a specific form, a broader variant, of a similar angelic force. The reasons that the new form of love manifests and the haunting signs suddenly vanish remain unknown and unclear. Controlled by the spirit of love, the child's ghost promises to make known to him the reasons for his absolution when he reaches heaven. Whether Ermengarde appears, and then the signs stop, or perhaps, the signs stop, and then Ermengarde appears does not matter to the god Eros or the spirit of love. The uncertain hope of love seems to overpower the uncertain fear of recreant crime and its blindly invoked penalty of violence with a spiritual forgiveness that makes possible a joyous dream.

In the narrator's most ardent and abject "worship of love" of the ethereal Ermengarde, he questions the passion that he felt for Eleonora by comparing it to his ecstasy with Ermengarde:

> What indeed was my passion for the young girl of the valley in comparison with the fervor, and the delirium, and the spirit-lifting ecstacy of adoration with which I poured out my whole soul in tears at the feet of the ethereal Ermengarde?--oh bright was the seraph Ermengarde! and in that knowledge I had room for no other.--oh divine was the angel Ermengarde! and as I looked down into the depths of her memorial eyes I thought only of them--and _of her_. (IV 243)

Finding his young cousin childish, the writer never specifies the formal terms of the comparison. Rather, abandoning his knowledge to an angelic adoration, he defers to a fascinating spirituality. The excessive "_her_" could doubly refer to Eleonora or Ermengarde. Rather than dwelling on the women's differences, he seems to reflect on the two women as similar, as heterogeneous doubles in respect to their hearts' shadowy recesses. Just as the lovers in the valley look down into the River of Silence and as the void in the lover's heart refuses and longs for fulfillment to overflowing, so with Ermengarde the lover looks down into her eyes, and his whole soul pours forth in tears at her feet. Unlike Roderick, the writer appears to draw a second draught from Eros' wave. His heart's void has room for "none other" than Ermengarde. Although his blind adoration and knowledge might stem from an earlier recreancy, his delirious adherence to his new love bodes hope.

However, in his passionately fanciful heart there seems little distinction between the women; both maidens appear spiritually seraphic. In passages deleted from the story's later versions and describing their so-called bi-partied souls, the women's similarity of auburn hair and fantastically light steps and of their countenances' "identical transition from tears to smiles" underscores the reflective doubling of loves in the writer's eyes (IV 315). The tale's epigraph from Lully supports this view: "'Under the protection of a specific form, the soul is safe'" (Mabbott II 645). When the fascinated writer looks down into Ermengarde's eyes, he claims that through their memorial he thinks only of the eyes and "_of her_." Bringing together the dead and the surviving as suggestive of negativity, these reflective embodiments become memorials that can commemorate the remembrance of either woman. Suggesting different degrees of form, in the lover's fancy, their eyes and identities seem to commingle images. In his reflective reading, his newly embodied love remains haunted by a phantasmic meaning. Regardless, the lover's passionate ecstasy recommends the emphatic italics. The "her" could refer doubly to both women as angelic forms of "the radiant loveliness of woman." The author encourages the reader, caught between belief and doubt about the relation, to try to resolve the riddle. The eyes of Ermengarde serve as monumental structures to preserve a memory, even if what the

memory alludes to remains rather ambiguously indistinct and suggestive.

Encouraging him to rest in peace, the narrator hears "through his lattice" the sweet sighs of Eleonora who had forsaken him. With her last words, the phantom tells him,

> "Sleep in peace!--for the Spirit of Love reigneth and ruleth, and, in taking to thy passionate heart her who is Ermengarde, thou art absolved, for reasons which shall be made known to thee in Heaven, of thy vows unto Eleonora." (IV 244)

Thus, the haunting voice of his departed kin releases him from his excessive invocation and encourages him to keep dreaming in peace. Perhaps mirroring his own possible desertion and infidelity to their shared lives in the valley, this forgiveness might also appear as a "rest in peace" death curse or suggest that through the curse of Ermengarde he shall receive his horrible penalty and, thus remitted in heaven through his additional suffering, discover the artificial reasons for his evil. Reflecting his own uncertainty concerning his treason, Eleonora's blessing and absolution might become a haunting curse and condemnation.

Nevertheless, the fanciful lover seems to stress a more joyous outcome. He appears to believe the spirit of love absolves him of his vows and, thus, their cursed horror. This forgiveness diffuses the violence of his excessively childish promises. As seen from the dead's perspective, love might make possible the forgiving of violations against the love's vows, if any such transgression can occur. However, the

unsettling considerations of the "reasons" that could make this forgiveness possible remain secret.

Comforting the spirit of her dying body, even to the point of violently exceeding the divine's shadowy recesses, and accepting for long years the painful changes of losses, whose memories motivate him to depart the valley, prepare him to introject a strange new world. Suspended between the undecidable possibilities of haunting promises, the hopeful dreamer awaits his absolution. Passing from the dreams of emptiness and loss to the strangeness of vanities and triumphs, the writer faithfully carries the haunting memories of the valley and Eleonora, embodies, and keeps them, despite the possibility of a recreant criminality.

Conclusion

With the cosmology of mourning and doubt and a range of ghost meanings from "The Fall of the House of Usher," "Morella," and "Eleonora," Poe's praise of an interesting portion of <u>George Balcombe</u> may receive a finer appreciation: "Fiction, thus admirably managed, has all the force and essential value of truth" (IX 256). With this "essential" vacillating memorably between substance and shadow, the citation both conflates truth and fiction and designates their memorial elements: the values of the mental realms and the forces of sensible attraction and repulsion and of psychical concentration and diffusion or expansion. For the

heterogeneously mediated inheritances of human sentiences these forces and values both condition and open possibilities. Doubly suspended between irreducible indeterminacies, the orphans seeking to adopt the lost constancy lying past shadowy recesses find their gravitational endeavors haunted by strange interruptions and excessive violences. As improper excesses involve all relations and attempts at appeasement in criminal wrongness, human sentience engages two inseparably unsettling tendencies: (1) concentration based on the imaginative beliefs of cryptic memories and (2) expansion or diffusion based on the fanciful doubts of necrophiliac memories. These never occur separately or purely. While Poe's texts pursue supernal beauty, often citing Bacon's "'[t]here is no exquisite beauty . . . without some <u>strangeness</u> in the proportion,'" they recognize imagination's enkindling and perverse violence as more ruinous than fancy's fluid acceptance (II 250).

Because the proper lies indistinct, ultimate assignments of blame and virtue remain doubtful and mournfully lost, and in any conflict either side may arrange support for its position: with a given context and viewpoint, Morella's husband, Morella, Roderick, Madeline, and so on may appear as right or wrong. With double undecidabilities unsettling every force and value, entity and identity, an ethical relativity seems to drive judgment to the same basis, a matter of tastes and biases, but perhaps weary from attending to contextual vacillations, such a view remains premature and precipitous by

imagining heterogeneity itself as proper. While similar in some regards, Roderick's artistic and Morella's husband's intellectual endeavors and dilemmas do not have the same effects. Tendencies toward concentration and diffusion have discernibly different effects on embodiments and reflections.

While any difference must remain an unsettled and unsettling difference without an ultimate difference, discernibly, concentration collapsing toward a believable closure and diffusion expanding toward a doubtful openness effect with violent differences their contexts of reflections, embodiments, entities, and identities. Finding an indistinctness within and without, individual sensitivities respond by reading or attending to different situations with more or less responsive care. In the economy of certain, although excessively undecidable, death, a difference in the concentration or diffusion of an attending viewpoint can impose or countenance violence, suffering, and death, but with its responses to the eruptions of inconstancy, incoherence and inconsistency, the dream of bereavement does not simply derive from or reduce to any heterogeneity. Thus, all violence remains a domestic violence. Stemming passionately from the unsettling of a particular context, a strange phantasmic effect, neither here nor there, haunts meaning and its responses with mourning and doubt.

Accompanying delimitation and assessment, this ghostly dilemma should call for a responsible sensitiveness to the

suffering and violence imposed unevenly and excessively on memorable embodiments and reflections. For Poe, fancy and, more tenuously, imagination attempt to address with more or less care this rift or fissure on which everything appears to depend. While an attentive and expansive openness seems more disposed to avoid the worst violences, if possible, its responsive adoption depends on a careful application to particular reflections, embodiments, and interruptions, not on consistent employment. Thus while avoiding dogmatic didacticism when closely read, Poe texts can both depict beauty as an imaginative destruction, and duty and obligation as a collateral moral.

The topological structures of Poe's tales mirror his cosmological concerns. Emerging from indistinctness, through particular material and spiritual inheritances of dreams, memories, tendencies, longings, and intuitions, each viewpoint relates with the embodiments and reflections of those with different dreams, memories, and legacies. In "The Fall of the House of Usher" and "Morella," the brother's and the husband's persistent and fearful attempts at possessing the unpossessable, the familiar and the same, inflict on those around them an oppressive terror and a murderous horror. In "Eleonora" with its more responsive and fanciful acceptance of loss, dilemmas of fidelity and betrayal, of blessing or curse, accompany the hope of love. Between the irreducible, composite tendencies toward concentration and diffusion, hope

and fear, and mental values, especially of ruined fancy, imagination, and idealism in these tales, doubled and doubling positions' emerge structurally on both apparent sides of dreamy viewpoints. Yet, remainders suspend the doublings between impossibilities of conception. These strange discontinuities accompany the dreamy possibilities of relational continuance, and an excessive irreducibility erupts and haunts efforts toward their cohesiveness.

Lacking any ultimate foundation, heterogeneously mediated relations remain criminally wrong, and thus, victim and victimizer reflect and commingle their doubling excesses of violence. However, contextually dependent, relational responses never involve the same violence. Never completely proper, the incorporative beliefs of concentration tend toward a burning destruction, and the introjective doubts of diffusion tend toward a fluid loss. As fearful responses to a threatening uncertainty, the concentrated addictions and obsessions seeking the satisfactions of sameness and constancy lead to murderous destructions. Seeking deliverances from strange dilemmas, the adherents overlook the forceful abuses and violations their persistences diffuse onto their kin. For survivors of this oppressive terror and horror, the differences of death become abject calls to assess the strange and haunting excess of the discontinuous remainder. They inherit a haunting. With a perverse precipitation and prematurity, the fatal break forces on survivors a

disorientation reeling before an unimaginable impossibility and marks their mournful efforts to persist with hopeless despondencies and despairing fervors. Familiarly, these violences inflict an estranging terror through their abusive attempts to alleviate and purify their victims, for after all, the Ushers and the Morellas do suffer and die miserably. With the possibilities of inheritances and responses tending toward an imaginative concentration or a fanciful diffusion, for Poe, different dreams of joyous hope and terrifying fear appear to make an embodied and reflective difference to survival.

Unfolded and unfolding through doublings and reflections, the viewpoints of Poe's tales implicate their readers in similar indeterminate excesses. Through the allusions to the characters' movements, textual preferences, selective gazes, and envisioned values, the stories invite collaborative readers to situate themselves and identify, to find themselves too caught up in violent excesses. Addressed more to onlookers than to the stories' characters, the narrators' rhetorical questions solicit the readers' complicities in excess. Having assumed that collusive readers fall in with the embodiment and position themselves somewhere amidst the contextually doubled options, Poe's dreamy tales then use approaching death and haunting dilemmas to unsettle the readers' adopted positions of interpretative constancy, their violent search for cohesiveness. These violent excesses, however, settle nothing. Repelling determinately dismissive

interpretations, these vacillating and contaminating suspensions elicit and convey ghastly and phantasmic ghost effects. Just as mourning and doubt accompany any fantasies of possession, so too memorial fantasies and dreams of belief haunt any alleged dispossession. Thus, in entertaining both ghosts and guests, the agonized and tormented narrator becomes both a hostage and a host. Thus tortured, readers suffer the ghost effects.

Suggested through definite conceivability, the absolutely proper appears immanently improper in Poe's cosmology. Thus, any responsive and responsible critique of the continuity of the proper, of the claims of the proper, property, and propriety, requires the memorable dreams of fancy and imagination, of acceptance and resistance. Even with something like the hypothesis of a cryptic secret, an unhomely kinship, or a hermeneutic mystery to hold together a reflection of difference and its double, between affirmation and disaffirmation, an interminably strange conflict develops and lapses into a regress. Thus, the possibilities of memory emerge as doubtfully and mournfully lost in relation to such a hypothesis. Suggesting the childish excesses of the dreams of fancy and imagination, the shadowy basis of memory, Poe's texts seem to push the point.

Having drawn the dreamy diversions of civilization and nature into ruin, into the impossibility of possibilities, through a skeptical critique of the inconceivability of the

proper, unity, and nihility, Poe's cosmology of mourning also suggests the haunting possibilities of impossibility remaining for survivors among the topologies of ruins. With the inability to consider anything beyond the shadowy recesses of irreconcilability, ghostly uncertainties of angelic and demonic meaning haunt the memorial inheritances that attempt to keep and share distinctions between fancy and imagination, belief and doubt, trust and betrayal, hope and fear, having and losing, truth and fiction, and fact and fantasy. This melancholy orphanage from the ultimate does not deny affective force and value to cherished efforts at maintenance, but circumscribes them with a memorial necromancy. Finding indistinctnesses within and without, the hosts and riveted hostages of these strangely interrupted hauntings must respond to the differences of entities and identities appearing to them. Poe's texts seem to suggest a dream-to-dream acceptance of this haunting uncertainty, perhaps to reduce the effects of concentrated terror, despite the accompanying fear of a loss of purity or control. Through selective memories, survivors haunted by the ghostly tend more or less aptly to adopt and impose their dreams on their embodied forces and reflective values. Because these dreams influence those around them with strange and excessive violations in an ethics of mournful skepticism, the relations between the inheritances of the dead and the embodiments and reflections of the surviving call for a careful consideration of the necrophiliac and cryptic

mnemotechniques that invoke the ghosts of desires, a monumentally responsible necromancy.

Notes

1. In <u>A Dissertation on the Passions</u> David Hume claims that good objects produce agreeable sensations and evil objects disagreeable sensations. He extends these sensible values to emotions: "When good is certain or very probable, it produces JOY: When evil is in the same situation, there arises GRIEF or SORROW." While aversion stems from evil and desire from good, the will exerts an effort "when either the presence of the good or the absence of the evil may be attained by any action of the mind or body" (139).

Hume finds none of these passions curious or remarkable except for the uncertainty of hope and fear: "When either good or evil is uncertain, it gives rise to FEAR or HOPE, according to the degree of uncertainty on one side or the other" (139). He finds this uncertainty stemming from a vacillation:

> Probability arises from an opposition of contrary chances or causes, by which the mind is not allowed to fix on either side; but is incessantly tossed from one to another, and is determined, one moment, to consider an object as existent, and another moment as the contrary. The imagination or understanding, call it which you please, fluctuates between the opposite views; and though perhaps it may be oftener turned to one side than the other, it is impossible for it, by reason of the opposition of causes or chances, to rest on either. The <u>pro</u> and <u>con</u> of the question alternately prevail; and the mind, surveying the objects in their opposite causes, finds such a contrariety as destroys all certainty or established opinion. (139-40)

While this opposition or uncertainty may rest either with the object or with judgment, the fluctuating or wavering between the opposite emotional possibilities of hope and fear gradually decreases with increasing security and certainty to joy or grief. When the chances lie more or less equally on each side, the agitations of hope and fear become greatest:

> in this situation the passions are rather the strongest, as the mind has then the least foundation to rest upon, and is tost with the greatest uncertainty. Throw in a superior degree of probability to the side of grief, you immediately see that passion diffuse itself over the composition, and tincture it into fear. Encrease the probability, and by that means the grief; the fear

> prevails still more and more, 'till at last it runs
> insensibly, as the joy continually diminishes, into pure
> grief. After you have brought it to this situation,
> diminish the grief, by a contrary operation to that,
> which encreased it, to wit, by diminishing the
> probability on the melancholy side; and you will see the
> passion clear every moment, 'till it changes insensibly
> into hope; which again runs, by slow degrees, into joy,
> as you encrease that part of the composition, by the
> encrease of the probability. (140-41)

Registering on emotions as well as intellectual concepts, the
uncertainty of an indistinct irreconcilability brings feelings
and thoughts, sensations and concepts, into a shared realm of
possibility.

2. Poe's sketch "Instinct Versus Reason" calls attention to
the uncertainty of distinguishing the human from the animal:

> The line which demarcates the instinct of the brute
> creation from the boasted reason of man, is, beyond
> doubt, of the most shadowy and unsatisfactory character--
> a boundary line far more difficult to settle than ever
> the North-Eastern or the Oregon. The question whether
> the lower animals do or do not reason, will possibly
> never be decided--certainly never in our present
> condition of knowledge. While the self-love and
> arrogance of man will persist in denying the reflective
> power to beasts, because the granting it seems to
> derogate from his own vaunted supremacy, he yet
> perpetually finds himself involved in the paradox of
> decrying instinct as an inferior faculty, while he is
> forced to admit its infinite superiority, in a thousand
> cases, over the very reason which he claims exclusively
> as his own. Instinct, so far from being an inferior
> reason, is perhaps the most exacted intellect of all. It
> will appear to the true philosopher as the divine mind
> itself acting _immediately_ upon its creatures. (Mabbott II
> 477-78)

The narrator faithfully implies that appearing as immediate,
the material and spiritual heterogeneities unsettle any proper
distinction between instinct and reason. Thus undecidably,
human sensibilities can also conflate with those of angels,
demons, and animals. In addition this passage reveals the
tendency to value the instinctive, often connected to the
material body and emotions, over the reasoning intellect,
seemingly connected to arrogance and self-love.

3. If one accepts that honor derives from the moral realm and
truth from the philosophical or intellectual, then according
to Poe in a review of George Balcombe, far from absolute,

these worlds depend on the economies of perceived supply and demand:

> truth and honor form <u>no</u> exception to the rule of economy, that value depends upon demand and supply. The simple meaning of this rule is, that when a demand for a commodity is great, and the supply small, the value of the commodity is heightened, and the converse. Apply this to truth and honor. Let them be in demand--in esteem--and let the supply be small--that is, let there be few men true and honest; then truth and honor, as cotton and tobacco, rise in value--and, vice-versa, they fall. (Harrison IX 264)

Severed from absolute knowing and resting on a dream that the economy's members could identify truth and honor if and when they appeared, such an unsteadfast economy of longing operates with an oppressive inconstancy in which attempts at ultimately possessing the demanded mental value elusively confront its increasingly impossible scarcity.

4. Concerned with sameness as opposed to diversity, Locke's section on "Personal Identity" in <u>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</u> moves to a definition of personal identity after looking at the notion of a "person":

> we must consider what <u>person</u> stands for;--which, I think, is a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places; which it does only by that consciousness which is inseparable from thinking, and, as it seems to me, essential to it: it being impossible for any one to perceive without <u>perceiving</u> that he does perceive. . . . For, since consciousness always accompanies thinking, and it is that which makes every one to be what he calls self, and thereby distinguishes himself from all other thinking things, in this alone consists personal identity, i.e. the sameness of a rational being: and as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past action or thought, so far reaches the identity of that person; it is the same self now it was then; and it is by the same self with this present one that now reflects on it, that that action was done. (67-68)

Locke relies on a notion of memory as a consciousness capable of extending backward to any past thought or action to maintain the constancy of sameness that constitutes identity. Because Locke connects thinking consciousness to persons, he distinguishes persons from the physically "organized living body" of the human and from "immaterial substance or soul

. . . wherever it be, and in whatsoever state" (72). Thus,
Locke defines the self as

> that conscious thinking thing,--whatever substance made
> up of, (whether spiritual or material, simple or
> compounded, it matters not)--which is sensible or
> conscious of pleasure and pain, capable of happiness or
> misery, and so is concerned for itself, as far as that
> consciousness extends. (73)

In order to preserve his notion of person, Locke's concern for
the sameness of consciousness becomes so important that his
insistence leads to what Poe might consider incredible
effects.
  Reincarnation becomes possible with this empirical view.
Locke extends these consequences into an ethical realm:

> This may show us wherein personal identity consists: not
> in the identity of substance, but as I have said, in the
> identity of consciousness, wherein if Socrates and the
> present mayor of Queinborough agree, they are the same
> person: if the same Socrates waking and sleeping do not
> partake of the same consciousness, Socrates waking and
> sleeping is not the same person. And to punish Socrates
> waking for what sleeping Socrates thought, and waking
> Socrates was never conscious of, would be no more thought
> right, than to punish one twin for what his brother-twin
> did, whereof he knew nothing. (74)

Thus, even though Socrates and the mayor have different
bodies, if their rational thinking functions the same, they
are the same person, the same self. Presumably, multiple
personalities operate like a psychological version of the
twins.
  Having already reduced everything to intuition and
opening it onto the infinite, which Poe believes
inconceivable, the idealists check imagination by a reliance
on a community's proper notion of rationality and duty in
Fichte and of aesthetics and the will in Schelling. Poe seems
more inclined to the views of Schelling than those of Fichte,
although as seen in his positions to Platonic ideals, he might
support a subtle pantheism. As such, the effects of mortality
as regarded by the transcendental idealists lead to a more
permanent dissolution than in Locke; the same does not come
back, except through revelation or myth.

5. This strangeness of resemblance, the too perfect identity,
calls to mind Freud's uncanny, whose antithetical meanings
bring together the homely and the unhomely, the familiar and
the unfamiliar. In his famous article, Freud twice cites
Schelling's definition: "everything is <u>unheimlich</u> that ought
to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light"

(XVII 225) and "something which ought to have remained hidden but has come to light" (241). Tending toward ambivalence, the term coincides with its opposite or contrary. According to the analyst, its proper understanding becomes comprehensible only by retaining Schelling's definition alongside the discovery that the uncanny appears "a sub-species" of the canny (226). While the canny might also appear as a sub-species of the uncanny, Freud indicates that the repression of morbid anxiety as well as the secret nature of the uncanny brings the meanings together by ignoring this imperative "ought." In addition to the shadowy anxieties of silence, solitude, and darkness (246), Freud finds uncanny strangeness attached to particular factors:

> animism, magic and sorcery, the omnipotence of thoughts, man's attitude to death, involuntary repetition and the castration-complex comprise practically all the factors which turn something frightening into something uncanny. (243)

Although Freud does not address the emotional uncertainty of fear in relation to the uncanny, he dismisses the theory of intellectual uncertainty as a possible explanation of the uncanny (230). Aware of the strangeness of these incredibilities, Poe might insist that the uncanny accounts for intellectual uncertainties. Instead Freud turns to problems with "reality" testing and infantile complexes to account for the phenomena, but this begs the question by assuming a positivist, allegedly empirical basis from which judgments may derive (248ff).

6. For the interested, Sarah Hale in her Flora's Interpreter assigns the following sentiments to the flora mentioned in these tales: buttercups stand for riches or the promise of future wealth, the white daisy for beauty and innocence, the blue violet for faithfulness, and grass for submission. She does not mention the associations of hemlock with poison or the asphodel with the land of the dead or allude to the biblical passage stating that "all flesh is grass" and withers in the summer's heat.

7. According to Herbert Spencer Robinson and Knox Wilson's Myths and Legends of All Nations, Sammael or Satan and his allied seraphim became demons after their fall. Their angelic powers became perversely opposed to those of the heavenly host (20).

CON-CLUSION

Seldom have great minds lived at the same time
without working from altogether different angles
towards the same objective. Whereas Leibniz based
the system of the spiritual world on the pre-
established harmony, Newton found the system of the
material world in the equilibrium of world forces.
But if after all, there is unity in the system of
our knowledge, and if we ever succeed in uniting
the very last extremes of that system, we must hope
that even here, where Leibniz and Newton diverged,
an all-embracing mind will at some time find the
midpoint round which the <u>universe of our knowledge</u>
moves--the two worlds between which our knowledge
is at present still divided; and Leibniz's pre-
established harmony and Newton's system of
gravitation still appear as one and the same, or
merely as different aspects of one and the same
totality.
  --Schelling, <u>Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature</u>

"Nothing is good for any thing except that which
contains within itself the essence of its own
vitality," answered he [Poe]. "Otherwise it is
mortal and ought to die."
  --Thomas Holly Chivers, <u>Chivers' Life of Poe</u>

The endeavor to close can only confer a suggestion, a
determination without a termination. Marked by vestiges of
mourning and doubt, memories and their lapses in both the
cosmology and tales by Poe implicate viewpoints, readings, and
morals in loss, in an irreconcilable indistinctness. Trying
to adapt to this unsettlement, forces and values emerge double
and become doubled by, enfold and become enfolded by a strange
loss, the impossibility of conception. Relating to material

attraction and spiritual repulsion, for Poe, the concentrated imagination and the diffused fancy, like gravity and electricity, commingle and migrate together toward a seeming loss without end.

Seeking the lost parent, mourning yearns for loving constancy and haunts all feelings of trust with an unceasing recall of losses. As Poe's characters' perspectives respond to the fascinating convergences and divergences of disappearance, each engages a different strategy of resistance and acceptance. Tending toward acceptance, the writer of "Eleonora" mourns his cousin's death and moves from the dreamy vale after the void in his heart longs for a more fulfilling love, and yet he senses a memorial similarity between his departed and new loves. Roderick marks an increasing resistance to loss and longs for a cure for his family's constitutional malady but finds a (dis)solution through his sister's return from the vault. Laughing over the (in)conclusive and traceless disappearance of his spouse's remains at the ancestral vault, Morella's husband desires a confirmation of the sameness of personal identity and (dis)covers it in the too perfect identity between his daughter and her mother, between the oppressive wife and the beloved child. Every mysteriously secret response commingling attraction and resistance remains excessively conflicted and ambivalent, doubly bound. With the similar constructions of human brains and oralities, incorporative and introjective

tendencies depend on at least an inkling of this nostalgic keeping, this memorial preservation. The final, impossible loss of a beloved, ideal object becomes so incredibly unbearable that a fantasized phantom, a crypt, appears to open onto the cherished of the cherished. Accusations of acting out insanities, impurities, and pathologies await those whose trust suffers grave and grievous interruptions and who, sensitized by losses, articulate and venture past the cultural dependency on a shared and hallucinatory constancy.

Skepticism questions the alleged designs of ultimate cohesion based on any lost unity and accompanies apparently credible affirmations by contextually and critically considering the different intervals and suspensions between doubles and heterogeneities. Although these perceptual and conceptual tendencies of faith remain virtually impossible to disentangle, the forceful assertions of their hypothetical values have powerfully different effects. Thus, as Poe's characters increasingly resist losses, their monumental endeavors at keeping the lost increasingly open onto questions of reliability and credibility. Located in a strange city and agreeing to call himself a mad dreamer, the writer of "Eleonora" openly encourages his readers to doubt his story and to try to unriddle his fanciful beliefs and thus the human dilemma reflected in the encounter between Oedipus and the sphinx. Situated within the Ushers' dreamy and cadaverous architecture, the depressed, empirically-oriented art

therapist finds some atmospheres and domains beyond analysis
or resolution and himself infected with what he wants to term
superstition.   Struggling with fear, Roderick desires an
alleviating deliverance from his constitutional malady, but
through a silent and terrible identification with his dwelling
he despairs of finding a remedy for the nervous affection
which "would undoubtably soon pass off": "'I must perish in
this deplorable folly. Thus, thus, and not otherwise, shall
I be lost'" (III 280). Almost incomprehensibly, Morella's
pupil abandons himself implicitly and with an unflinching
heart to her studies and influence, yet he claims to keep in
reserve his thoughts and deeds, unless, he cautiously adds, he
forgets himself, remains mistaken, or errs.

Without the conceptual possibility of locating any
ultimate center or origin, either concrete or abstract, the
strange tendencies toward belief and doubt rely on spectral
unities, monumental phantasms.   Thus, and not otherwise,
sustained by a fascinating and nostalgic duplicity, any
"perfectly pure" act of hypothetical fidelity and loyalty
accompanies and   enables   a   suspicion   of   hypocrisy.
Undecidably, any fancied gesture of return or duty threatens
with a perverse excess to diverge, stray or convert into a
poisonous betrayal.   The losses of emotional attachments,
familiarities, and the samenesses of identity threaten to turn
cherished cryptic ideals into counterfeit simulacra and seem
to demand desperately enforced efforts at preservative

security and purges. Allegations of impropriety, insincerity, and confidence games await those who argue responsively that such values lack an ultimate surety or reliable ground.

Derived from substantial shadows, the binding fascination of memory, both as the remembered and the power of remembering, makes possible the fabrications of perception and conception, and attempts to look back and recall the lost and dead. Guided and structured by (con)textual heritages, as if entranced or hypnotized, the passionate necromancy of memory tries to situate itself through and yet apart from its supposed (con)texts, but currents of suspensions, oppressions, and repressions haunt these interposed relations with ethereal and ghastly interruptions. As similar gestures within similar contexts tend to bring similar frustrations and appeasements, an inherited and shared context makes it easier to suppose constancy, coherence, and consistency. Lodged between loss and appearance, the dreams of memory constructed from the lost and dead remain ultimately uncertain and must doubly consider different positions to the proper: relations to the con of confidence, both as an accompaniment and togetherness and/or as an accomplice and a cheating swindle. Thus offering fulfillment, the hopeful writer in "Eleonora" feels a memorial reflection haunting his new love, but with a terrible ghastliness in "The Fall of the House of Usher" and "Morella," the despairing narrators sense a doubled collapse and a fluid emptiness. Woven from necrophagous or coprophagous oralities

and suspended uncertainties, the ordered architectonics of _loci_, _topoi_, knots, images, positions, and placements can make a vestigial, but monumental, difference of effect. Instead of simply regarding the absent as a constant zero or cipher, a linguistic negation, a psychological repression, a cultural or social oppression, it becomes important to remember the topological effects of grief and doubt as suggestive of a negativity without apparent limit. Through a violent necromancy tending toward the transparency of fancy or the suggestiveness of imagination, memorial values and forces can provide the appearances of joy and sorrow and/or devastate them through their virtually effective phantasms.

Poe's critical cosmology of monumental ruins relies on memory, which in turn endeavors to look back and relate to the lost and inconceivable. Constrained by mourning and doubt, Poe's orphaned epistemology lacking self-evidence, demonstration, or proof feels compelled to a pantheistic vision of a phantasmic volition of "the primordial and irrelative _One_" (XVI 222). The rhythmic inheritances of the unfounded--the unsettled vestiges of indulged hopes and fears and entertaining beliefs--emerge from dreamy shadows and strange hauntings to get adopted as memorial keepings. As in observing the light that left nebulae many years ago, perceptions rely on lost and ghostly processes: "the processes at present observed, or supposed to be observed, are, in fact, _not_ processes now actually going on, but the phantoms of

processes completed long in the Past" (XVI 265). Similarly in seeking human relations, people tend toward impossible conceptions like spirit and god: "The human brain has obviously a leaning to the 'Infinite,' and fondles the phantom of the idea" (XVI 275). Wanting an ultimate perceptual and conceptual foundation, a haunting suspension adopts, resonates, and reflects sympathetically with the memorial preservation of a certain unfoundedness. Through strange convergences and divergences, this sustentative endeavor engages a kind of misprision. Although any entertained trust or faith might turn out as ultimately confirmed, the mediating heterogeneity that renders certainty impossible also seems to make contextual mistakes virtually inevitable.

The recessive and knotted interposition of repulsion and attraction unsettles and accompanies any absolute demarcation of any identity or entity from its context, any alleged proper from its improper: hence, the impossible difficulties of separating the living from the dead, the healthy from the insane, and the sentient heterogeneities of humans from those of inanimate matter, animals, spirits, ghosts, angels, and demons. To constrain the Gordian complexity of perception and conception to the exclusive proprieties of some science, belief, or ideology appears to banish similarly possible and effective forces prematurely. Memories haunt and suspend the impossibility of ultimately enfolding everything, nothing, and, hence, anything. Conflating the memorial and the

possible, fact and fiction, and the real and the imagined, the cosmology of Eureka follows a remarkable letter from the year 2848 and suggestively reflects the millennial acceptance of its published views, just as the tale of poison and surrender in "The Imp of the Perverse" follows an essay on the perverse.

Just as Poe's criticisms and cosmology generalize his visions, so his tales particularize them. Encountering memorable doubles, each of Poe's sojourners relates a similarly haunting suspension. Their fervent narrative responses to the impossibility of death and complete doubt parallel the powers of the passionate poet extolled in "Byron and Miss Chaworth." As with Abraham and Torok's image of the phantom, exchanging Miss Chaworth's position for the reader and Byron's words for the text underscores Poe's double approach to the ghastly rift of absence:

> If _she_ felt at all, it was only while the magnetism of _his_ actual presence compelled her to feel. If _she_ responded at all, it was merely because the necromancy of _his_ words of fire could not do otherwise than exhort a response. In absence, the bard bore easily with him all the fancies which were the basis of his flame--a flame which absence itself but served to keep in vigor--while the less real but at the same time the less really substantial affection of his ladye-love, perished utterly and forthwith, through simple lack of the element which had formed it into being. (XIV 152)

The negativity of absence keeps in vigor the cryptic fancies that fire the passionate ideal of his hypnotically charged magnetism and the necromancy of his words. Congruent with fancies, dreams, and reveries, those psychic shadows of shadows, whose impressions the poet wants to convey to memory

on starting himself to wakefulness, this heartfelt necromancy serves as the basis for the haunted suspension of memory. By arranging speculative accounts of mortal loss and doubt in language, the double unsettlements of Poe's tales attempt to reveal the dissembling on which semblance rests and the strange currents and bewildering ghastlinesses on which memory depends. Whether credible or incredible, for the masculine narrators this memorial appearance accompanies the allegedly embodied arrival of the double, the intrusion of the feminine. For the fanciful lover of "Eleonora" this engagement seems marginal and even mournfully hopeful, but for the observers engaging empirical ideals this cognizance becomes fearfully critical and depressing.

Strangely secluded, neither strictly included nor excluded, each depicted viewpoint reflects on its contextual losses through doubles and doublings. The fascinated accounts draw from phantasmic memories that supposedly tend either toward the suspended losses of a necrophiliac fancy or toward the haunted disappearances of a cryptic imagination. Ultimately unfounded and commingled, these continued pursuits of symmetries, whether of superficial forms and motions or of determining and controlling principles, can lead only to ruins and haunting suspensions. Judgment draws selectively on memorials without an absolutely grounded surety and remains unable to center itself. Thus all responses that look back become exorbitant and excessive. As self-identity depends on

these networks of attractive and repulsive tendencies, the suspended ghost of personal consciousness finds itself violently estranged amidst haunting doubles and heterogeneities and in doubtful possession of "itself."

Questioned and solicited to bear witness, the insistent reader reflectively identifies with his or her memorial calls through the abandoned texts that beyond any science or god erases their own borders. Engaging the want that compels a consumptive orality and fidelity, the recessive shadows and haunted suspensions beckon the already heterogeneous reader toward their own ghastly ruins and remains in citing themselves. In precipitation and haste, the hungry speculator reads with strangely recessive phantoms clinging to his or her own ghostly samenesses and enkindling the passions that supposedly relate her or him to the text. Whether introjective or incorporative, skeptical or credible, fanciful or imaginative, the onlooker falls in with the arranged humor and suffers a sense of his or her own losses. The reader's inheritances mediate the textual inheritances. Seeking a shared, but phantasmic, affirmation of joy and sorrow, the collusive and collaborative spectator bears with the excessive textual remains that appear to embody, reflect, and deliver the rare, ecstatic confirmation and the more common, torturous disconfirmation. Thus excessively opening onto mourning and doubt through the suspended sameness of the haunted corpus, the strange regard of reading approaches a pleasurable ecstacy

and a painful torture with its own ideal fantasies of perfection.

Just as Freud's psychology tries to staunch the effects of death and negativity by interposing the repetitive constancy of the unconscious, so too within a ring that includes Goethe and Andreas-Salomé, Nietzsche's philosophy attempts to seal these rifts with an eternal recurrence of the same. Less laconic than Freud's foreword to Bonaparte's biography of Poe, the philosopher's anguished reading of Poe in <u>Beyond Good and Evil</u> seems to mark a tortured failure to appreciate loss with effects similar to Dayan's and Cavell's appeals to the undeniable and acting out. Doubly attracted and repulsed, Nietzsche confides that "he who knows the heart finds out how poor, helpless, pretentious, and blundering even the best and deepest love is--he finds that it rather <u>destroys</u> than saves!" Operating under an obligation preferably avoided, Nietzsche attempts to insinuate a difference between feeling and thought by affirming that the womanly superstition that loving sympathies "can do <u>everything</u>" deceives itself as to its power (246):

> He who has such sentiments, he who has such <u>knowledge</u> about love--<u>seeks</u> for death!--But why should one deal with such painful matters? Provided, of course, that one is not obliged to do so. (247)

The writer's apparent repulsion, however, draws him into a death-bound affinity with those great men who, sharing the psychologist's or historian's "fear of memory," perceive doubly with a great sympathy and a great contempt. Finding

the success of the "'work'" "the greatest liar" for "in the world of historical values spurious coinage <u>prevails</u>," Nietzsche believes the great men and poets function as "poor little fictions composed afterwards" (245). In an attempt to delineate the torment inflicted by these "'great men,'" the philosopher of resentment enlists Poe in account of the "phantom of disbelief" with which these painfully flawed writers struggle:

> Those great poets, for example, such as Byron, Musset, Poe, Leopardi, Kleist, Gogol . . . , as they now appear, and were perhaps obliged to be: men of the moment, enthusiastic, sensuous, and childish, light-minded and impulsive in their trust and distrust; with souls in which usually some flaw has to be concealed; often taking revenge with their works for an internal defilement, often seeking forgetfulness in their soaring from a too true memory, often lost in the mud and almost in love with it, until they become like the Will-o'-the-Wisps around the swamps, and <u>pretend to be</u> stars--the people then call them idealists--often struggling with protracted disgust, with an ever-reappearing phantom of disbelief, which makes them cold, and obliges them to languish for <u>gloria</u> and devour "faith as it is" out of the hands of intoxicated adulators:--what a <u>torment</u> these great artists are and the so-called higher men in general, to him who has once found them out! It is thus conceivable that it is just from woman--who is clairvoyant in the world of suffering, and also unfortunately eager to help and save to an extent far beyond her powers--that <u>they</u> have learnt so readily those outbreaks of boundless devoted <u>sympathy</u>, which the multitude, above all the reverent multitude, do not understand, and overwhelm with prying and self-gratifying interpretations. (245-46)

Wrestling with an insatiable perfectionism and anger at defilement, an impulsive trust and distrust, Nietzsche's own dismissive loathing and haughtiness attempt with a double affirmation to cut away this paltry and ignorant pretense of tormenting and "ever-reappearing phantom of disbelief," but

the endeavor fails to sever the suspended haunting that enables his views to articulate themselves. Instead of more of the constant repetitions of unconscious memory shadowed by repressions and their alleged cures and more of the same recurrences of the too true memory and the creative, so-called escapes of forgetting, dubiously and lamentably Poe's memorial texts turn toward no more of the same. Without the arrogance of a judgmental right or wrong, this womanly concern and sympathy for the no more or nevermore of embodiment resonates with the cries of the bereaved relations of those disappeared and with the oppressive terror inflicted by those possessed and addicted adherents of idealistic propriety, purity, and power.

Moving from animate response to responsive sensitiveness and thence to speculative responsibility, Poe's ethics lies enfolded with his memorial dream of attractive and repulsive embodiments as well as concentrated and expansive reflections. Brilliantly impossible and radiantly gloomy, both the psychic and the sensible lie irreconcilably and indistinctly doubled, ghostly. Poe's faithful assertion that the sense of the heart divine throbs and resounds in the human heart joins divine volition to the human will (XVI 311). Thus, the criminal secrets of human sentience respond excessively to a divine mystery, but the irreconcilability with which humans approach the interposed knot leaves much responsibility to indeterminably circumscribed contexts. This imaginative and

fanciful vision alone, perhaps later, Poe affirms, might unriddle and make more bearable the enigmas of inexorable fate and divine injustice. He believes:

> Our souls no longer rebel at a <u>sorrow</u> which we ourselves have imposed upon ourselves, in furtherance of our own purposes--with a view--if even with a futile view--to the extension of our own <u>joy</u>. (XVI 313)

Because the ultimate lies in undecidable ruins, decision may become possible. If so, the willed imposition on the interposed recess might effect the assumed, but uncertain, balance between fear and hope. Reflectively, a soul's sympathetic tendencies toward imagination and fancy, its responsible adoptions of an attitude toward cryptic and necrophiliac memories, might make an embodied difference between that soul's sorrow and joy as well as the pains and pleasures inflicted on those under the influence of that soul. Although the hardihood of the imagination may impose its own concentrated pleasures on itself and those around it, this possibility may enkindle either a magnificent grandeur underscored by the inconceivable divine and/or a horribly terrorizing oppression, a prison of violence, highlighted by the artificially civilized pursuit of the ideal proper.

In "The Colloquy of Monos and Una" the spirit Monos makes this connection as he observes that "the Earth's records had taught me to look for widest ruin as the price of highest civilization" (IV 204). If it should turn out that inconceivable circumscriptions render decisions impossible, then ultimately the will and volition remain futile. All the

violence and destruction wrought by the "infantine imbecility" of civilizations "infected with system, and with abstraction" and out of control goes for naught (IV 203). Although Poe's texts seem to regard the cryptic flames and ideal beauties of civilization as fascinating, if widely ruinous and demonic, his works also seem to respect the fanciful acceptance of mysteriously flowing processes of mournful doubt as less violent, more survivable, and, perhaps even, angelic. This suggests that attending to the effects of material immanence leads to less violence than to those of spiritual transcendence, even if the latter appears more fascinating and beautiful. While each tendency remains strangely irreconcilable and indistinct, Poe's works can hint at the violent effects on embodiments and reflections of each without privileging either. Although these excessively violent dreams may make no ultimate difference, the responsible should treat decisions as if they did make a contextual difference, especially considering their detrimental impacts on different embodiments and reflections.

Despite any imagined origin or afterlife, assumed values and forces impact materially those around their adopter, almost as if insistent self-will stimulates destruction and ruin. Eleonora's lover eases her death through his care and concern, whereas Roderick's search for a family cure hastens his sister's demise and Morella's husband's persistence precipitates his wife's bitter departure and his child's

decease. Not always sympathetic, each marginalized woman responds to the insistence of her masculine double and interrupts his attempt to dominate the narrative.

Calling for a reassessment of the material and spiritual as creations and creatures indistinct from a witness's own tendencies, Poe's ethical faith expands the "proper" possibilities of the sensible and the psychic:

> It was not and is not in the power of this Being--any more than it is in your own--to extend, by actual increase, the joy of his existence; but just as it _is_ in your power to expand or to concentrate your pleasures (the absolute amount of happiness remaining always the same) so did and does a similar capability appertain to this Divine Being, who thus passes his Eternity in perpetual variation of Concentrated Self and almost Infinite Self-Diffusion. What you call The Universe is but his present expansive existence. He now feels his life through an infinity of imperfect pleasures--the partial and pain-intertangled pleasures of those inconceivably numerous things which you designate as his creatures, but which are really but infinite individualizations of Himself. (XVI 314)

It remains Poe's substantial dream that pleasure's absolute amount remains the same and the divine feels his life of vacillating throbs through his various creatures. As an intuition, this fideistic assumption of a pantheistic constancy holds in place an undecidable economy of pleasures and pains and permits the indistinctness needed for choice, a choice haunted by doubt and mourning. While this ineffable coherence may soothe and make more bearable a tendency toward rebellion and absorption, its oppressive memory might also serve to justify a passionately mystical rapport with supernal beauty, regardless of the ruinous price following in its wake.

Ultimately, the circumscribed values and forces of the choices between the ruins of imagination and fancy remain undecidable.

While perhaps it might appear more worthy for humanity to maintain a certain rigid inhumanity in relation to those strangely different, unfamiliar, and not the same, the always lost unity and the mediation of heterogeneity also suggest that less violent responsivenesses to the processes of marginalized embodiments might lead to more hopeful and careful considerations of differences. If Poe's texts acknowledge the burning destruction of monomanaically dwelling with the addictive constancy and cryptically faithful idea, often of the proper, then in a world of seemingly improper and excessive violences, his works do not dismiss a willed response to migrate affirmatively toward an equally violent outpouring of victims' rights either. While the violences of orality seem unavoidable, through an increased acceptance of mourning and doubt in regard to fervently held "ultimate" ideas and ideals, survival might become less violent by attending with more sensitive concerns and considerations to the losses that seem to effect an improper "transgression." At least, Poe's texts suggest that melancholic hopes and sensitivities survive the constraints of mourning and doubt. Ghost meanings must always respond precipitously and prematurely to the ultimately undecidable possibilities of matter and spirit and, allowing a capacity for adhesive decision, engage a responsibility for the concentrated or

expansive way memories regard, respect, and treat differences, for the necromantic mnemotechniques that raise the dead.

By closely and sensitively attending to the immanent architectonic structures, introjective processes, and confluent embodiments and reflections, however transparent and fantastic, Poe's textual approaches to haunted constancy and suspended sameness suggest ways to diminish the precipitous destructions of idealism without neglecting idealism. By a contextual, accountable reading that admits to its strange necromancy, its inconstancy of feeling and thought, its want, and its ultimate impossibility of conception, the phantasmic suspense of the (con)text can receive a respect and appreciation that does not lose sight of the secret mysteries toward which mourning and doubt tend. Past the hopes for transcendence and identity and between the notions of perfection and impropriety, Poe's texts doubly and strangely entertain and enable a greater acceptance of grave loss and critical negativity than many readers insistent on an assuring and recuperative sameness have understood or imagined. This shadowy engagement with the recesses of uncertainty has perhaps terrified, frightened, disgusted, repulsed, and amused many of these readers by threatening to unsettle their urgent and hasty affirmations, but the fascinated and haunted suspensions of his ruined texts remain, indicating memorially the abandonment and adoption from which spring a doubtful and mournful regard of differences and similarities.

Poe's texts insinuate a heterogeneous doubling tending toward loss into the terms by which his texts get perceived and conceived. Composed of ghosts, these heartfelt mournings and skeptical doubts drive possible reflections and embodiments to the partially survivable brinks of emptiness and disappearance. By tracing the strange want of perceptions, feelings, and thoughts, his works indicate the gaps and aporias that accompany and haunt affirmations. Enfolding the literature of graveyard passions and skeptical thoughts, his textual visions help situate the assumptions needed to treat thought as feeling and feeling as thought and unsettle the violences that lie between the proper and the improper. Thus confusing the particular and the general, his cosmology and criticisms double his tales, and his tales double the varieties of violences. The structural effects of his suggested dynamics stalk with a seemingly haunted madness between the alleged sides of many contemporary issues.

While these concerns of skepticism and mourning occur without and within Poe's (con)texts, his treatments of these seemingly elusive difficulties and problems suggest a more sophisticated management of the effects of value and force through an increased attention and sensitivity to the undeniable limits of loss. During the next call for a (re)turn to the proper by dividing the haves from the have-nots or the reliable from the unreliable, whether to family values, academic fundamentals, laws and orders, political

ideologies, health cares, or national or ethnic identities, a careful consideration to phantasmic suspensions and apparent borders that seem to make possible the imagined constancy of the ideal object(ive) might contribute to disrupting the violent neglects and abuses accompanying the enforced fantasies of purity.

Suspended between doubt and credulity, introjection and incorporation, and fancy and imagination, and wavering between guest and host, between hostage and ghost, the reader effects a collaborative necromancy in ascribing meaning to the text. By regarding the strangely embodied and reflected identities of the text with commingled acceptances and resistances, the responsive reader delivers himself or herself to the doubled addresses as the addressed and situates herself or himself within a strange topology at a certain unlocalizable place. From the mouth of this impossibility of conception derive the ultimate impossibilities of perception and reading. As an important engagement with the unsettlements of skepticism and mourning, Poe's textual perspectives envision a difference enfolding virtually every regard and respect. If consciously approached, his suggestions of negativity ought to make an effective difference that will allow for responsible vestiges of hopes while acknowledging the desperate fears of inevitable and undeniable loss.

REFERENCES

Abraham, Karl. "A Short Study of the Development of the Libido, Viewed in the Light of Mental Disorder." <u>Selected Papers of Karl Abraham, M.D.</u> Trans. Douglas Bryan and Alix Strachey. New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1979. 418-501.

Abraham, Nicolas. "Psychoanalytic Esthetics: Time, Rhythm, and the Unconscious." Trans. Nicholas Rand. <u>diacritics</u> 16.3 (Fall 1986): 3-15.

Abraham, Nicolas and Maria Torok. "Deuil <u>ou</u> mélancolie, Introjecter-Incorporer." <u>L'Écorce et le Noyau</u>. Paris: Aubier Flammarion, 1978. 259-275.

---. "Introjection--Incorporation: <u>mourning</u> or <u>melancholia</u>." Trans. Nicholas Rand. <u>Psychoanalysis in France</u>. Eds. Serge Lebovici and Daniel Widlöcher. New York: International Universities P, 1980. 3-16.

---. "A Poetics of Psychoanalysis: 'The Lost Object--Me.'" Trans. Nicholas Rand. <u>SubStance</u> 43 (1984): 3-18.

Acton, H. B. "Idealism." <u>The Encyclopedia of Philosophy</u>. Chief Ed. Paul Edwards. Vol. 4 of 8. New York: Macmillan, 1967. 110-18.

Ariès, Philippe. <u>The Hour of Our Death</u>. Trans. Helen Weaver. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981.

Auerbach, Jonathan. <u>The Romance of Failure: First-Person Fictions of Poe, Hawthorne, and James</u>. New York: Oxford U P, 1989.

Bailey, Alan. "Pyrrhonean Scepticism and the Self-refutation Argument." <u>The Philosophical Quarterly</u> 40.158 (Jan. 1990): 27-44.

Becker, Ernest. <u>The Denial of Death</u>. New York: Macmillian Publishing, 1973.

Bonaparte, Marie. <u>The Life and Works of Edgar Allan Poe: A Psycho-Analytic Interpretation</u>. Trans. John Rodker. London: Imago, 1949.

Bowlby, John. <u>Attachment and Loss</u>. 3 vols. New York: Basic, 1969.

Cavell, Stanley. <u>In Quest of the Ordinary: Lines of Skepticism and Romanticism</u>. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988.

Dauber, Kenneth. "The Problem of Poe." <u>Georgia Review</u> 32.3 (Fall 1978): 645-657.

Dayan, Joan. <u>Fables of Mind: An Inquiry Into Poe's Fiction</u>. New York: Oxford U P, 1987.

Derrida, Jacques. "<u>Fors</u>: The Anglish Words of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok." Trans. Barabara Johnson. <u>The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonymy</u>. By Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok. Trans. Nicholas Rand. Minneapolis: U of Minn P, 1986. xi-xlviii.

Douglas, Mary. <u>Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo</u>. London: Routledge and Kegan, 1980.

Edwards, Paul. "'My Death.'" <u>The Encyclopedia of Philosophy</u>. Chief Ed. Paul Edwards. Vol. 5 of 8. New York: Macmillan, 1967. 416-419.

Fichte, Johann Gottlieb. <u>Fichte: Science of Knowledge with First and Second Introductions</u>. Eds. and Trans. Peter Heath and John Lachs. New York: Appleton-Century-Croft, 1970.

Forclaz, Roger. "Edgar Poe et la Psychoanalyse." <u>Revue des Langues Vivants</u> 36.3-4 (1970): 272-288, 375-389.

Forrest, William Mentzel. <u>Biblical Allusions in Poe</u>. New York: Macmillan, 1928.

Foucault, Michel. <u>The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception</u>. Trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Random House, 1975.

Freud, Sigmund. <u>Beyond the Pleasure Principle</u> (1920). Trans. James Strachey. <u>The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud</u>. Ed. James Strachey. Vol. 18 of 24. London: Hogarth P, 1962. 3-64.

---. "Forword." Trans. John Rodker. <u>The Life and Works of Edgar Allan Poe: A Psycho-Analytic Interpretation</u>. By Marie Bonaparte. Trans. John Rodker. London: Imago, 1949.

---.   The Interpretation of Dreams (Second Part) (1900).
Trans. James Strachey. The Standard Edition of the
Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. Ed. James
Strachey. Vol. 5 of 24. London: Hogarth P, 1962. 339-
627.

---. "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917). Trans. Joan Rivière.
The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works
of Sigmund Freud. Ed. James Strachey. Vol. 14 of 24.
London: Hogarth P, 1962. 243-258.

---. "A Note Upon the 'Mystic Writing-Pad'" (1925). Trans.
James Strachey. The Standard Edition of the Complete
Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud.   Ed. James
Strachey. Vol. 19 of 24. London: Hogarth P, 1962. 226-
232.

---. "Negation" (1925). Trans. Alix Strachey. The Standard
Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund
Freud. Ed. James Strachey. Vol. 19 of 24. London:
Hogarth P, 1962. 234-239.

---. "The 'Uncanny'" (1919).   Trans. Alix Strachey.   The
Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of
Sigmund Freud.   Ed. James Strachey.   Vol. 17 of 24.
London: Hogarth P, 1962. 217-256.

Gargano, James W. "The Question of Poe's Narrators." The Naiad
Voice: Essays on Poe's Satirical Hoaxing. Ed. Dennis W.
Eddings. Port Washington: Associated Faculty P, 1983.
22-28.

Hale, Sarah Josepha. Flora's Interpreter: or The American
Book of Flowers and Sentiments. Boston: Marsh, Capen,
and Lyon, 1836.

Halttunen, Karen. Confidence Men and Painted Ladies: A Study
of Middle-class Culture in America, 1830-1870.   New
Haven: Yale U P, 1982.

Hardt, John S. "Doubts in the American Garden: Three Cases of
Paradisal Skepticism." Studies in Short Fiction 25.3
(Summer 1988): 249-259.

Hemans, Felicia. "The Sceptic." The Complete Works of Mrs.
Hemans. Ed. by her sister. Vol. 1 of 2. New York and
Philadelphia: D. and Geo. S. Appleton, 1849. 247-61.

Hirsch, David H. "The Pit and the Apocalypse." Sewanee Review
76.4 (Autumn 1968): 632-652.

Hume, David. "A Dissertation on the Passions." Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary. Ed. T. H. Green and T. H. Grose. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1875. 139-166.

---. Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals. Eds. L. A. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Nidditch. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1975.

---. Hume: Selections. Ed. Charles W. Hendel, Jr. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955.

Hungerford, Edward. "Poe and Phrenology." American Literature 2 (Mar. 1930-Jan. 1931): 209-231.

Irwin, John T. American Hieroglyphics. New Haven: Yale U P, 1980.

Kennedy, J. G. Poe, Death, and the Life of Writing. New Haven: Yale U P, 1987.

Klein, Melanie. "Mourning and its Relation to Manic-Depressive States." The Writings of Melanie Klein: Love, Guilt, and Reparation and Other Works, 1921-1945. Vol. 1 of 4. New York: Macmillan, 1975. 344-369.

Kristeva, Julia. Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia U P, 1982.

Kronick, Joseph G. "Edgar Allan Poe: The Error of Reading and the Reading of Error." Literature and Psychology 35.3 (1989): 22-42.

Lacan, Jacques. "Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in Hamlet." Trans. James Hulbert. Literature and Psychoanalysis: The Question of Reading: Otherwise. Ed. Shoshana Felman. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U P, 1982. 11-52.

Lacoue-Labarthe, Philippe and Jean-Luc Nancy. The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism. Trans. Philip Barnard and Cheryl Lester. Albany: SUNY P, 1988.

Lerner, Arthur. Psychoanalytically Oriented Criticism of Three American Poets: Poe, Whitman, and Aiken. Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson U P, 1970.

Leibniz, Gottfried W. F. v. Leibniz: Selections. Trans. and Ed. Philip P. Wiener. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951.

Locke, John. <u>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</u>. <u>The Empiricists: Locke, Berkeley, Hume</u>. Abridged by Richard Taylor. Garden City: Doubleday/Anchor P, 1974. 7-133.

May, Herbert G., and Bruce M. Metzger. <u>The Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha: Revised Standard Edition</u>. New York: Oxford U P, 1965.

Nietzsche, Fredrick. <u>Beyond Good and Evil</u>. Trans. Helen Zimmern. <u>The Complete Works of Fredrick Nietzsche</u>. Ed. Oscar Levy. Vol. 12 of 18. New York: Russell and Russell, 1964.

Pahl, Dennis. <u>Architects of the Abyss: The Indeterminate Fictions of Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville</u>. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1989.

Pease, Donald E. <u>Visionary Compacts: American Renaissance Writings in Cultural Context</u>. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1987.

Poe, Edgar Allan. <u>Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe</u>. Ed. Thomas Ollive Mabbott. 3 vols. Cambridge: Belknap P of Harvard U P, 1978.

---. <u>The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe</u>. Ed. James A. Harrison. 17 vols. New York: AMS P, 1979.

---. <u>The Letters of Edgar Allan Poe</u>. Ed. John Ward Ostrom. 2 vols. New York: Gordian P, 1966.

Popkin, Richard H. "Skepticism." <u>The Encyclopedia of Philosophy</u>. Chief Ed. Paul Edwards. Vol. 7 of 8. New York: Macmillan, 1967. 449-461.

---. "Theological and Religious Scepticism." <u>The Christian Scholar</u> 39.2 (June 1956): 150-158.

---. <u>The Third Force in Seventeenth-Century Thought</u>. New York: E. J. Brill, 1992.

Praz, Mario. "Poe and Psychoanalysis (1933)." <u>Sewanee Review</u> 68 (Summer 1960): 375-389.

Quinn, Arthur Hobson. <u>Edgar Allan Poe: A Critical Biography</u>. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1941.

Rank, Otto. <u>The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study</u>. Trans. Harry Tucker, Jr. Chapel Hill: UNC P, 1971.

Riddel, Joseph N. "The 'Crypt' of Edgar Poe." <u>Boundary 2</u> 7.3 (Spring 1979): 117-144.

Robinson, Herbert Spenser and Knox Wilson. <u>Myths and Legends of All Nations</u>. Garden City: Doubleday, 1960.

Sacks, Oliver. <u>The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat</u>. New York: Harper, 1987.

Scarry, Elaine. <u>The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World</u>. New York: Oxford U P, 1985.

Schelling, F. W. J. <u>Bruno, or, On the Natural and Divine Principle of Things</u>. Ed. and Trans. Michael G. Vater. Albany: SUNY P, 1984.

---. <u>System of Transcendental Idealism</u>. Trans. Peter Heath. Charlottesville: U P of VA, 1978.

Silverman, Kenneth. <u>Edgar A. Poe: Mournful and Never-ending Remembrance</u>. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991.

Simpson, J. A. and E. S. C. Weiner, Preparers. <u>The Oxford English Dictionary</u>. 20 vols. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon P, 1989.

Thompson, G. R. <u>Poe's Fiction: Romantic Irony in the Gothic Tales</u>. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1973.

---. "Unity, Death, and Nothingness--Poe's 'Romantic Skepticism.'" <u>PMLA</u> 85.2 (Mar. 1970): 297-301.

Tiffany, Daniel. "Unbridled Space: Thoughts on Architecture, Mass Media, and Death." <u>Semiotext[e]/Architecture</u>. Ed. Hraztan Zeitlian. Brooklyn: Automedia, 1992. 82-87.

Torok, Maria. "Maladie du deuil et fantasme du cadavre exquis." <u>L' Écorce et le Noyau</u>. Paris: Aubier Flammarion, 1978. 229-251.

Volkan, Vamik D. <u>Linking Objects and Linking Phenomena</u>. Madison: International Universities P, 1981.

Yates, Frances A. <u>The Art of Memory</u>. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1966.

Žižek, Slavoj. <u>The Sublime Object of Ideology</u>. New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1989.
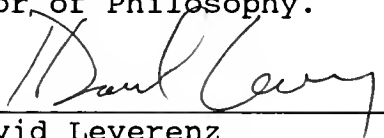
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Born on January 27, 1947, in McIntosh, Florida, Bill
Jernigan grew up in northeastern Florida, graduated from
Gordon Military College in 1965, and received a B.A. in
English and philosophy with a minor in anthropology from UNC-
Chapel Hill in 1969. After a year's postgraduate work at
SUNY-Stony Brook, he worked as a sixth-grade teacher, stock
clerk, vehicle inspector, alcoholism counselor, half-way house
manager, and purchasing agent before receiving his M.B.A.
specializing in management and computer science from UF-
Gainesville in 1982. Active in recovery programs since 1973,
he became involved with the spirituality of American Indians
and European mythologies since 1982. After a year as a
material control manager in manufacturing, he turned to
college teaching and came to the UF English department to get
his M.A. in 1988 and his Ph.D. in 1994. As a member of the
downwardly mobile middle-class, he currently enjoys mountain
hiking, camping, painting, reading, videos, good food, and
detailed emotional and intellectual conversations. Through
management and/or teaching, he would like to help increase the
societal awareness of the implications of co-dependent
relations.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.
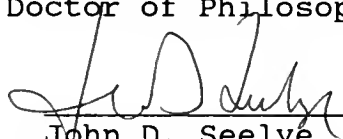
John P. Leavey, Jr., Chair
Professor of English

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.
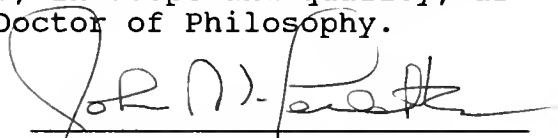
David Leverenz
Professor of English

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.
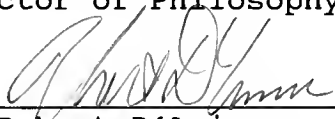
John D. Seelye
Graduate Research
Professor of English

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

John M. Perlette
Associate Professor of
English

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Robert D'Amico
Associate Professor of
Philosophy

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of English in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

December, 1994

_____
Dean, Graduate School